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## SEBETWANE AND THE MAKOLOLO<sup>1</sup>

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### SYNOPSIS

*Sebetwane, one of the most notable figures in southern Bantu history, was chief of the Patsa branch of the BaFokeng, one of the Sotho tribes. Uprooted in the Difaqane, they migrated under his leadership from the Orange Free State to Northern Rhodesia in search of a tranquil home. Repulsed from Dithakong in June 1823, the BaFokeng (now known as MaKololo) fought their way through the BaHurutshe, the BaKgatla and the BaTlokwa. They attacked the BaNgwaketse after subduing the BaKwena; and then, defeated by the BaNgwaketse (aided by white men), they invaded the BaNgwato and went on to Lake Ngami where they overcame the BaTawana. Thereafter in about 1840 they crossed the Zambezi and Sebetwane mastered the BaRotse and other tribes. He repelled invasions by MaTebele and AmaZulu. In 1851, during the visit of Livingstone and Oswell he died. As a tribe the MaKololo did not long outlive their great chief: they came to an end in 1864. This article attempts to reconstruct the story from often divergent native tradition; it amends and supplements the account given by D. F. Ellenberger. The chronology is largely conjectural or inferential.*

### 1

IN JUNE 1851, when, after their long trek from the south, David Livingstone and William Cotton Oswell were on an island of the Chobe River (a tributary of the Zambezi), Sebetwane, chief of the MaKololo, came one night to where they were sleeping on beds of grass within an enclosure of reeds. He came alone and sat quietly by their fire. Presently they awoke and he began to talk, recounting the story of his life and wanderings, his victories and his rebuffs. Livingstone said it

was like listening to the Commentaries of Caesar. "By the fire's glow and flicker among the reeds, with that tall, dark, earnest speaker and his keenly attentive listeners", Oswell wrote, "it has always appeared to me one of the most weird scenes I ever saw."<sup>2</sup> Hour after hour till near the dawn the thrilling narrative continued, broken only by an occasional question thrown in from Livingstone's lips.

The story cannot now be reproduced as Sebe-

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an extract from a study (not yet

published) of the life and times of the Rev. Roger Price who was the sole adult European survivor of the London Missionary Society's disastrous expedition to the MaKololo in 1859-60 and afterwards served in Bechuanaland until his death in 1901.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Oswell, *William Cotton Oswell* (London, 1900), vol. I, p. 242.

twane told it, but the gist can be gathered from various sources. Later investigations enable us to expand and amend the account given by Ellenberger and Macgregor in the *History of the Basuto*<sup>1</sup> and it is worth retelling. The migration of the MaKololo under Sebetwane's leadership from the (present) Orange Free State to the Zambezi and beyond may well rank with some of the most famous marches in history – say, the wanderings of the Israelites between Egypt and Palestine during forty years, or the march of the Ten Thousand recounted by Xenophon. The fame of it loses none of its lustre even in comparison with the exploits of the Voortrekkers. For over twenty years Sebetwane led his people from place to place, steadily making a way through hostile tribes and braving with fortitude the terrors of famine and thirst in the desert, until at last they settled in comparative security where Livingstone and Oswell found them.

## 2

The story begins early in 1823 when Sebetwane addressed his assembled people to this effect:

"My masters, you see that the world is tumbling about our ears. We and other peoples have been driven from our ancestral homes, our cattle seized, our brothers and sons killed, our wives and daughters ravished, our children starved. War has been forced upon us, tribe against tribe. We shall be eaten up, one by one. Our fathers taught us *khotso ke nala*, 'peace is prosperity', but to-day there is no peace, no prosperity. We may sow, but we cannot reap; what we plant is eaten by others. What are we to do? My masters, this is my word: Let us march! Let us take our wives and children and cattle and go forth to seek some land where we may dwell in tranquility! That is my word. I have spoken!"

Sebetwane's people were BaPatsa, a section of the much-divided BaFokeng, who were regarded as the senior of the many tribes now known collectively as BaSotho. They have been called

'the thinkers of the Bantu'. Because of their intelligence they exercised an influence quite out of proportion to their numbers and military prowess. For a long period they lived on and around the Kurutlele mountain which lies between the Vet and Sand rivers in the Orange Free State. Then, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, began the Time of Troubles known as Difaqane, following the rise of the Zulu power under Chaka, east of the Drakensberg. In the hope of escaping the ruthless conqueror fugitive hordes streamed across the mountains. Under the impact tribes of the interior clashed one upon another like so many ninepins. Some were decimated, some were annihilated. Thousands of displaced people wandered over the wide open plains or sought refuge in the mountains. Large numbers were driven by famine to live by violence and pillage.

The brunt of the invaders' onset was borne by the BaTlokwa, ruled by a redoubtable woman named MmaNtatisi and her son Sikonyela. The AmaHlubi of Pakadita took them by surprise. Beaten back the BaTlokwa fell upon a section of the BaFokeng and drove them northwards; later they assailed the BaFokeng at the Kurutlele and after fierce fighting compelled them to flight across the Vaal River where they joined their fellow-tribesmen who had preceded them. Neither at this time, nor later, did the BaTlokwa cross that river into the Transvaal. Another tribe, the Ba-Taung, under their chief Mophethe and his son Moletsane, were also driven across the river and for many years carried out depredations far and wide – depredations wrongly attributed by some writers to the BaTlokwa.

It was probably in June 1822 that the BaFokeng took refuge in the Transvaal. During their wanderings the eldest son of Mangwane, their chief, was killed by lions and the succession passed to his younger brother, Sebetwane. He was then about twenty years of age, tall and wiry, and of a light tawny complexion. He had already in various conflicts shown the courage and leadership that were to mark his future career.

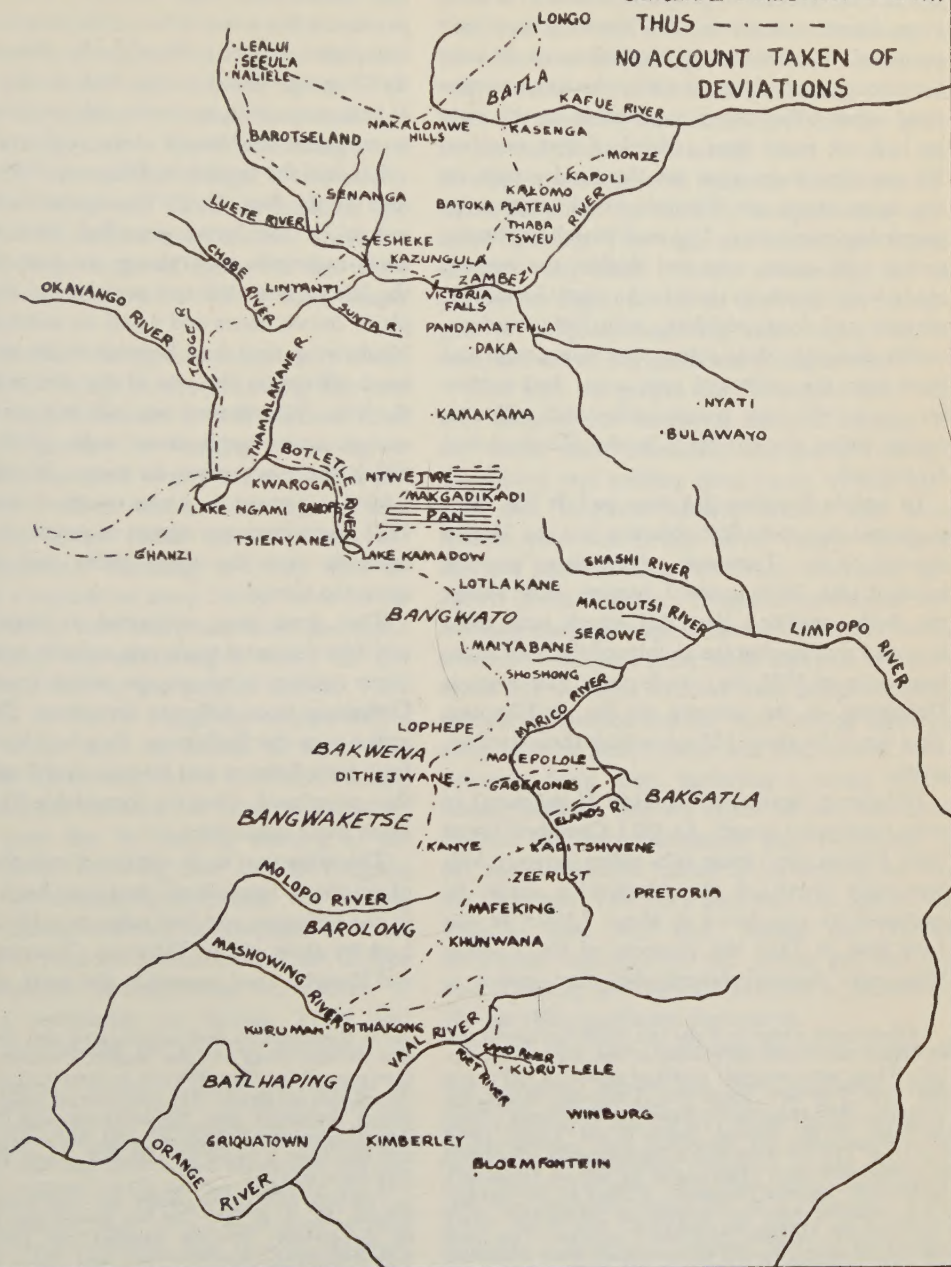
<sup>1</sup> D. F. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, written in English by J. C. Macgregor

(London, 1912). Hereinafter referred to as E.M. This is the source of what we call Sotho tradition.



# MARCH OF THE MAKOLOLO

GENERAL DIRECTION SHOWN  
THUS - - - -  
NO ACCOUNT TAKEN OF  
DEVIATIONS



Long discussion followed Sebetwane's dramatic appeal. His will prevailed. Other Fokeng chiefs<sup>1</sup> joined him with their people and also, it is said, some deserters from the BaTlokwa. It has been estimated that he had 30,000 followers. It may have been so at a later date after he had incorporated other tribesmen but probably at the start he had not more than a third of that number. We are then to imagine ten thousand people on the move across an illimitable veld infested by wandering marauders. The men march vigilantly, armed with spears, axes and shields; the women, many with infants on their backs, carry household utensils and food; children, with little burdens, toddle alongside their elders; the young men and boys drive the cattle and pack-oxen. And so they set out on the long peregrination that will ultimately bring the survivors to the Zambezi and far beyond.

In which direction did they go? It has been suggested that their first objective was the Marico district of the Transvaal where they 'severely handled' the BaHurutshe;<sup>2</sup> but we here accept the Sotho tradition that this attack took place later and that leaving the vicinity of the Vaal at the beginning of 1823 they made their way towards Dithakong in the country of the BaThaping. This would be about 150 miles from their starting-point.

Dithakong figures as Lattakoo (Litakoung) in early missionary annals. In 1813 Campbell found "this African city" lying in a valley between hills two miles north of the Mashowing river; he estimated its population at about 7,500.<sup>3</sup> It was there that in 1816 the pioneers of the London Missionary Society planted their first station in

Bechuanaland; in 1817 they removed to the Kuruman river with the bulk of the resident BaThaping under their chief Mothibi. After their departure, a site a few miles to the westward was in occupation by the BagaMaidi, vassals of the BaThaping. These people fled on the approach of Sebetwane who, no doubt, allowed his followers to replenish their stores at the fugitives' expense.

I visited the locality in February 1949 accompanied by the Rev. H. C. Thompson. Leaving Kuruman by the broad gravelled road that leads north-eastwards to Vryburg, we branched off to the left to Boscabel and ran the car over a level plain. In two hours and a half we reached the dry Mashowing river-bed beyond which was a scattered village on the site of the old town among the hills. We climbed one hill and surveyed the ancient unmortared stone walls (*dithako*) from which the place takes its name. Standing there I tried to picture the scene on those days in June 1823 when immense masses of people swarmed at intervals over the open plains and descended upon the town.

That great host, estimated at between forty and fifty thousand souls, was actually composed of three distinct tribal groups which converged on Dithakong from different directions. The first to arrive were the BaFokeng; they had hardly rested from their fatigues and feasted on the cattle which they plundered, when the formidable MaPhuthing made their appearance.

This tribe (not to be confused with the BaPhuti of southern Basutoland) had also been uprooted in the Difaqane and had taken to a life of pillage. Led by their chiefs Tshwane (Tsooane, Cuane) and Ratsebe, they crossed to the north of the Vaal

<sup>1</sup> Ellenberger writes as if the two chiefs Lekapetsa and Ramabusetsa joined Sebetwane at the start (E.M., p. 306). These were probably chiefs of groups of BaFokeng that were scattered about the Transvaal before the Difaqane. Of Lekapetsa we know nothing more; from the *Diary of Dr. Andrew Smith* (Cape Town, 1940) vol. II, p. 119, we learn that a Ramabusetsa (described as 'a Mantatee chief') had charge of one of Mzilikazi's cattle-posts. Ratsebe (Rasippi), a chief of the BaPhuthing, attacked him and carried off cattle that were recovered by Mkalipi, Mzilikazi's general. This took place at the time when the Griquas made their disastrous attack on the MaTebele (described by Smith who visited the spot where the MaTebele killed them, pp. 115 ff.) - i.e. in 1831. When Smith was in the Transvaal (July

1835) Ramabusetsa had disappeared and Smith heard that he was living at Lake Ngami, evidently with Sebetwane. If this identification is correct, it would seem that it was in about 1831 (and not in 1823, as Ellenberger suggests) that Ramabusetsa and his people joined Sebetwane. That he had previously been his ally and later a vassal of Mzilikazi seems improbable. (See note, p. 11.)

<sup>2</sup> Marion How, 'An Alibi for Mantatisi', *African Studies*, 13, 2, p. 70: "In his wanderings northward, he [Sebetwane] 'severely handled' the Bahurutshe at Kurrichueneng (Kaditshwene) and then from there made his way to Dithakong . . ."

<sup>3</sup> John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa* (London, 1815), p. 202.



early in January 1823 and fell upon the BaRolong of Sefunelo at Thabeng (now Buisfontein). Then they invaded the Marico district, attacked the BaHurutshe and destroyed their town, Kaditshwene; and in March proceeded against the BaNgwaketse. Makaba, the chief, was driven from Kgwakgwe the capital, but rallied his people and drove off the invaders. The MaPhuthing then turned south, crossed the Molopo River, utterly defeated the Ratlou and Tshidi branches of the BaRolong at Khunwana and remained there for some time: large herds of cattle fell into their hands, and the fields were full of corn, nearly ripe.

Robert Moffat, the famous missionary, comes into the picture at this juncture. In May this year he set out from Kuruman to visit Makaba, chief of the BaNgwaketse. On reaching Dithakong he was earnestly entreated to proceed no further because of the invaders who now lay between him and Makaba. Some called them 'Mantateesa', others 'Matebele'.<sup>1</sup> Refusing to credit what he considered a monstrous story Moffat went on his way, but what he then heard convinced him that a Goth-like army was advancing to attack the BaTlhaping and destroy his mission station. They were said to be led by a gigantic woman with a single eye in her head. At Mosita, he learnt that they were at Khunwana, only a few hours distant; and he prudently retraced his steps to Kuruman where he gave the BaTlhaping warning of the imminent peril. Knowing that the BaTlhaping could not of themselves withstand the coming onslaught, Moffat hastened to Griquatown to enlist the aid of Andries Waterboer and the Griqua armed horsemen. Arrangements were made to mobilize a commando at Griqua Town and Campbell and Moffat got back to Kuruman on

<sup>1</sup> These names, it should be noted, are reported by Moffat as spoken by BaTswana. Historians have not unnaturally identified the 'Mantateesa' with the people of MmaNtatisi, i.e. the BaTlokwa. D.F. Ellenberger fell into this error, but lived to have his doubts. His son, René, at his request, made further inquiries and became convinced that the BaTlokwa had no part in the battle of Dithakong, that, in fact they never in their depredations crossed the Vaal. Mrs. How (in the article cited in Note 2, on p. 52) with quotations from her uncle's letter has given the *coup de grace* to the error. Professor I. Schapera (*Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, London, 1951, pp. 102-103), after examination of Moffat's journals and

June 12, accompanied by George Thompson, an English traveller. Rumours continued to reach them of the advance of the 'Mantatees'; on the 18th they were said to have reached Nokaneng, a few miles from Dithakong. On the 20th Thompson went to reconnoitre. He found Dithakong deserted of its six thousand inhabitants, and had not gone far on the road to Nokaneng when he saw the invaders marching in an immense black mass towards the town: he narrowly escaped being captured by them. That night the missionaries began to bury their most valuable possessions and to prepare for flight; but on the 20th the first contingent of Griquas, numbering about eighty horsemen, arrived at Kuruman and brought relief.

Who were the people that Thompson saw? We may imagine that they were the MaPhuthing. If so, where were Sebetwane and the BaFokeng? Thompson says nothing about them; we may suppose that they had already arrived and were hidden from view in one of the valleys. No love was lost between these two tribes, both alike uprooted in the Difaqane. A quarrel now broke out between them, perhaps about the cattle, and Sotho tradition says that a great battle followed in which about five hundred warriors were killed on either side. It is reported that the MaPhuthing captured some of Sebetwane's cattle and that he took some prisoners from them, including a young widow named Setlutlu. She fell to the lot of a sub-chief Lechae, but later Sebetwane was enamoured of her and she became mother of his son and successor, Sekeletu. The story goes that she was of the Makollo tribe and that, seeing the favours Sebetwane bestowed on her, people got into the way of calling his followers Makollo or Makololo. We use this appellation henceforth.

It was after this battle that the third horde of other sources, reached the same conclusion, independently. See my note in *Africa*, 22, 4, p. 375. The truth seems to be that the BaTswana applied the terms 'BoMmaNtatisi' and 'Matebele' indiscriminately to all marauders or wandering foreigners coming from the east. There is evidence of this in the vernacular histories, *Dico tsa Secwana* (edited by A. J. Wookey, Tiger Kloof, 1929) and *Ditirafalo tsa merafe ya BaTswana* (edited by I. Schapera, Lovedale, 1940). In the former, e.g. Chief Kgama III is quoted as saying: "The Ba-Sotho who are called Mantatese or Matebele and who came here are the people of Sebetwane, of Mabusetsa . . ." (translated).



invaders arrived at Dithakong – the BaHlakwana under their chief Nkgaraganye. An offshoot of the BaKwena, they seem, before being dispersed in the Difaqane, to have been neighbours of the MaPhuthing: Nkgaraganye married a daughter of Tshwane. Numerous as they were they suffered from a lack of unity and whole clans were wiped out before they followed the MaPhuthing across the Vaal. Of their movements before they reached Dithakong we know nothing: perhaps they acted in close association with the MaPhuthing.

The battle against these invaders was fought on June 26. The previous day Moffat, with a small escort, rode ahead of the Griquas with the intention of persuading the chiefs to retreat peaceably, but this gallant act failed and he had to retire under a shower of spears. Early next morning the Griquas, now numbering about one hundred, arrived before Dithakong, under their captains. Moffat and J. Melville, the government agent at Griquatown, accompanied them. A thousand or so BaTlhaping, armed with bows and arrows, followed but did not display conspicuous valour in the fighting. The enemy was discerned to be in two divisions – one, the MaPhuthing, occupying the town, the other, the BaHlakwana, massed on the sides of a hill near by. "Their appearance", Melville wrote, "was truly formidable." Tall, athletic, very black, naked but for an exiguous apron of skin, and wearing plumes of ostrich feathers, they were armed with spears and battle-axes and oval shields like those of the Zulus; some carried a weapon consisting of a sharp sickle-shaped iron blade mounted on a knob-headed handle two feet long. They threw out wings, Zulu fashion, to enclose the approaching horsemen, but the nimble riders always evaded encirclement and opened fire with deadly effect. Guns

were something new and mysterious to these warriors: horse and man seemed to be one creature with two heads, one of which spat fire and death. They fought bravely – Moffat said, with lion-like ferocity – charging and counter-charging, but with little effect. After some hours, the BaHlakwana moved towards the town and coalesced with the MaPhuthing; sallying out they formed a dense, crowded mass, Melville said, 500 yards long by 100 deep: he reckoned them to be 50,000. The fight was resumed with increased vigour, lasting seven hours in all, and it was not until two of the chiefs were killed – Tshwane of one group and Nkgaraganye of the other – that the invaders began to give way. They retreated through the town, setting fire to the grass-thatched roofs, and leaving behind five hundred corpses, a large number of wounded, and many women and children. Moffat rushed about the field in an endeavour to stop the butchering of wounded men and of defenceless women by the BaTlhaping – "the base and bloody Bechuanas". The wounded seemed to have no idea of yielding or asking for quarter, Melville wrote: he saw one warrior with ten javelins and as many arrows sticking in his body, who was keeping about forty of his foes at a distance.<sup>1</sup>

In their retreat, the two tribes went in different directions: the MaPhuthing along the path by which they had come; led by Ratsebe they continued their depredations beyond the Vaal. The BaHlakwana made straight for the Vaal, pursued some distance by Griquas; and when these turned back to round up the thousand captured cattle, the BaTlhaping continued the chase. The river had risen and in attempting to cross many men, women and children perished. Very few, indeed, escaped: one of them was Setaki, son of Nkgara-

<sup>1</sup> Moffat's account of the affair is in his *Journal*, (*Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, and in his *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, 1842), pp. 340 ff. See also George Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa* (London, 1827), vol. I, chaps. 8-12; Observations by Melville, pp. 301 ff. Historians confuse the invaders with the BaTlokwa; e.g. G. McCall Theal, *History of the Boers in South Africa* (London, 1887), pp. 32-3; Eric A. Walker, *A History of South Africa* (London, 1928), p. 182; W. M. Macmillan, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. VIII, South Africa, (Cambridge, 1936),

p. 302. See also G. W. Stow, *The Native Races of South Africa* (London, 1905), chap. xxiii, 'The career of the Mantatee horde'. S. M. Molema (*Chief Moroka*, Cape Town, 1951, pp. 9 ff.) fell into the same error: where he writes BaTlokwa we should read MaPhuthing. In *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (London, 1952), A. Sillery first brings the people of MmaNtatisi to Dithakong (p. 12) but later in a note on p. x (having read Schapera) corrects himself. Sir H. H. Johnston in his introduction to D. W. Stirke's *Barotseland* (London, 1922) makes Sebetwane the son of MmaNtatisi, on what evidence he does not say.



ganye, from whom in after years D. F. Ellenberger first heard of the disaster.

The part played by the MaKololo in this battle – if any – is obscure. Moffat and Melville do not mention them. Had they departed before June 26; or did they remain aloof and quiescent? In any case Sebetwane must have been convinced that there was no prospect of a peaceful settlement in the vicinity of the death-dealing weapons of the Griquas. To proceed westwards would have brought them into the waterless Kalahari. There was no alternative but to march north. There in what we call Bechuanaland and Transvaal lived numerous Tswana tribes, large and small, strong and feeble. If these would allow him to reside in some unoccupied portion of their vast domain, well and good; if they resisted, Sebetwane was prepared to fight his way through to new lands beyond them.

There was no peace in that region. Strong tribes preyed upon the weaker by periodical cattle-raids and waged intermittent wars among themselves. Intestine conflicts were prevalent between rivals for the chieftainship. Moreover, as we have already observed, predatory hordes from south of the Vaal were ravaging the tribes – the BaTaung, for example, and now the MaPhuthing again. Most formidable of all were the MaTebele of Mzilikazi, the Zulu, who had revolted against Chaka and fought his way into the Transvaal about the same time that Sebetwane was marching north; he was to be Sebetwane's chief rival for the dominion of the far north. Around a small nucleus of Zulus that had set out with him, he had mobilized young men from vanquished tribes, armed them with short stabbing-spears, and by rigid discipline had welded them into regiments that were almost invincible save by firearms.<sup>1</sup> It was into this seething cauldron that Sebetwane now thrust his hand.

It is difficult – nay, it is impossible – to reconstruct a satisfactorily precise narrative of subsequent events. We have to piece together traditions that are irreconcilable in detail. The names 'Matebele' and 'BoMmaNtatisi' are applied indis-

criminately to different invaders in such a manner that often we are at a loss to know whom they refer to – whether MaKololo or others. Except where a rare European traveller fixes a date the chronology is largely conjectural.

## 3

It would appear that in their northward march the MaKololo first encountered the BaRolong living south of, and on, the Molopo river. These had already suffered greatly at the hands of the MaPhuthing and were not able effectively to resist Sebetwane who pushed his way through them at Khunwana and Phitshane. From the Molopo he advanced north-eastward into the Marico district of the Transvaal, a picturesque huddle of hills that cradle a number of streams. With ox-wagons the distance between Dithakong and the Marico could be covered in a week or ten days; marching slowly with many halts, and living on the plentiful game and what foodstuffs they could pillage, the MaKololo probably took two or three months, and we may reasonably imagine they arrived in September 1823.

John Campbell, during his travels on behalf of the London Missionary Society, had penetrated to this delectable land in 1820 – the landscape reminded him of Wales.<sup>2</sup> It was then inhabited by the BaHurutshe who shared with the BaKwena a status of primacy among the Tswana tribes. Their extensive corn-fields, neat towns and copper-smelting showed them to be intelligent, ingenious, industrious. He estimated at 16,000 the population of their chief town Kaditshwene ('the home of baboons') – he called it Kurrechuene – situated on an eminence some 28 miles N.E. of the modern town of Zeerust. Their wealth in cattle was great: Campbell observed 'dense herds stretching a length of two miles as they returned from pasture. They were then ruled by a regent named Diutlwieng. After Campbell's visit they fell on evil days. In April and May 1823 – i.e. some weeks before the battle at Dithakong – Moffat heard that the

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley* (London, 1949), p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa . . . Second Journey* (London, 1822), vol. I, chaps. xx-xxiii.



'Mantateesa' had attacked and pillaged Kadi-tshwene, and that the town was "no more than a heap of rubbish". There were also rumours that Diutwileng had been killed. We take these 'Mantateesa' to have been MaPhuthing: this seems to be confirmed by the fact that Hurutshe women were found derelict at Dithakong after the battle.<sup>1</sup> In spite of their losses the BaHurutshe resisted the MaKololo when these attempted to pass through the Marico.<sup>2</sup> They were defeated in battle at a place named Lekontwaneng, near the town of Mosega. Hurutshe tradition affirms that it was in this fight Diutwileng was killed.<sup>3</sup>

Proceeding after this battle along the left bank of the Madikwe (Marico) river and then (it would seem) along the Elands river, the MaKololo entered the territory of the BaKgatla at the junction of the Api and Crocodile rivers. At that time the tribe was ruled by Motlotle who, though not the rightful heir, had been chosen as regent because of his mild qualities. He soon showed himself to be a real savage tyrant, putting to death all who were rivals for the chieftainship. The tribesmen, resenting his cruelties, began to

disperse; so that when the MaKololo appeared (Ba-ga-Mmalegogwana, the BaKgatla called them) the weakened tribe was not able to oppose them. Motlotle, with a single follower, fled westwards, was ambushed by refugees of the tribe and beaten to death.<sup>4</sup>

Hard on Sebetwane's heels came the BaTaung who after being driven from their home overran much of the western Transvaal and made terrible havoc among the BaHurutshe and other tribes. In his *dithoko* Moletsane, their chief, boasted of his exploits:

*Mophathi a phatega tsa Lefurutshe,*  
(I am) the ravisher who seized all that was in  
the land of the BaHurutshe.

It is said that Sebetwane and Moletsane entered into a temporary alliance and for some time raided in concert; but this could not have been for long.<sup>5</sup> Early in 1824 Mzilikazi appeared on the scene and forced Moletsane to retreat to the Vaal.<sup>6</sup> Sebetwane afterwards told David Livingstone that before he reached the Zambezi Mzilikazi attacked

<sup>1</sup> *Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, p. 73. *Ibid.*, p. 102: "From four Bahurutsee women, who are among the prisoners, we learn that the Bahurutsee are no more, signifying that Kureecheene is destroyed. Many of its inhabitants, including Leeuqueeling, the regent, are killed, and the remainder scattered in the fields without cattle." In May 1824 Moffat heard that the 'Mantatees' were still in the vicinity of the Hurutshe country (p. 117), in July that they had departed - "driven out" (p. 131). Were these MaKololo?

<sup>2</sup> E. M., p. 307, tells that Sebetwane after the fighting at Khunwana attacked and defeated the BaNgwaketse. I follow the Ngwaketse tradition that the attack came from the north after the MaKololo had entered Kwena territory (*Ditirafalo*, p. 132). It seems likely that, instead of straightway challenging such a formidable chief as Makaba, Sebetwane would follow the line of least resistance by going to the Marico.

<sup>3</sup> *Dico tsa Secwana* (p. 41) says that Diutwileng was killed in the battle of Lekolontwaneng by 'Matebele who came from Basutoland'; *Ditirafalo* (chapter vii, written by V. Ellenberger, p. 209) tells how Mokgosi, chief of the BagaMaletse, was visiting in Hurutshe country when Sebetwane (Maphatana) came and Diutwileng was killed in battle at Mosega. See also V. Ellenberger, 'History of the Ba-ga-Maletse of Ramouts' in *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, vol. xxv, 1937-38, p. 1 ff., where these statements are repeated. It was at Mosega that the abortive French and American missions were afterwards planted: E. W. Smith, *Lindley*, pp. 75 ff.

When Moffat visited the Marico district in November 1829 he saw ample evidence that the beautiful valleys

of that fair land, which had formerly been inhabited by a dense population, was become the habitation of wild beasts and venomous reptiles, where lions roamed at large as if there were none to oppose. In 1835 he and Dr. Andrew Smith found vestiges of large towns. The MaTebele had completed the destruction started by 'Mantatees' - BaPhuthing, MaKololo, BaTaung. Yet there were some towns of BaHurutshe. (*Matabele Journals*, vol. I, pp. 6, 99.)

<sup>4</sup> I. Schapera, *A short History of the BaKgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela* (Cape Town, 1942), p. 7. See also his chapter (no. vi) on this tribe in *Ditirafalo*, where (p. 168) the MaKololo are called "Ba-ga-Mmalegogwana, e le Ba-Sotho ba-ga-Sebetwane".

<sup>5</sup> E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 73. "Moletsane finding himself ruined [in the Difaqane], invaded the territory of the Barolongs, and advanced to the banks of the Merikoa [Marico], conquering all that lay in his way. Sebetwane, chief of the Bapatsa, was in alliance with him, when an unexpected attack from Moselekatsi [Mzilikazi] obliged them both to flee." Perhaps it is this alliance that was referred to by certain BaHurutshe, just arrived at Phitshane from near Kaditshwene, who told Moffat, 31 July 1824, that the 'Mantatees' had joined another tribe and (together) had conquered six towns of the BaKwena and then attacked the BaHurutshe. (*Apprenticeship*, p. 131.)

<sup>6</sup> Moletsane, while still a youth, had made a name for himself among the BaTaung in conflicts with the much-dreaded Tshwane of the BaPhuthing: this was before the BaTaung were driven north of the Vaal. See the statement drawn up at Moletsane's own request in *Basutoland Records*, vol. I, p. 517 (Cape Town, 1883).



him on two occasions and captured some of his cattle. Perhaps it was while he was in the Marico or among the BaKgatla that these encounters took place. The advent of the MaTebele explains why Sebetwane did not lead his people further into the Transvaal or remain in the fertile, well-watered Marico district. He evidently thought it prudent to leave Mzilikazi in possession. As the African proverb has it: "There is not room for two bulls in one kraal." He led his people north-westwards into what is now the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

It was perhaps at this time that he fell upon a section of his old enemies the BaTlokwa who had hived off a hundred years before from the main body and were now living in the hilly country east of Gaberones, their present centre.<sup>1</sup> Intestine dissension facilitated his progress. About four years before this the chief of the BaTlokwa, Kgosi, had gone to the help of the BaNgwaketse against an attack by Motswasele, chief of the BaKwena. During a battle fought at Tswete, a long isolated hill between Gaberones and Molepolole, Kgosi's warriors played him false: they said: "Let the dogs help him in his fight; he feeds only his dogs and neglects us his fighting-men." They deserted their chief and he was killed. The succession was disputed and eventually Leshage, who was not the rightful heir, seized the chieftainship and earned the reputation of an oppressor. Then the MaKololo appeared. Weakened by dissension the BaTlokwa could not withstand them and fled northwards into the country of the BaNgwato where they were permitted to live at Leruti, a few miles north of Serowe. But it came to Leshage's ears that the MaKololo were on their track and, carrying off a herd of cattle belonging to their hosts, they fled into the terrible thirst-lands of the north. Angered by the theft of their cattle the

BaNgwato sent a commando which overtook them beyond the Botletle River. In a fight that took place near a baobab tree (known to this day as Mowana wa BaTlokwa) the BaNgwato recaptured their cattle and then seized all those belonging to the refugees. A number of these BaTlokwa who remained near the Botletle afterwards joined the MaKololo.

Meanwhile Sebetwane had abandoned his intention of pursuing the BaTlokwa and turned to the BaKwena in the north-west.

## 4

The BaKwena offer another example of the instability of the Tswana chieftainship in this period. At the time of Sebetwane's invasion the chief was an usurper named Moruakgomo who about 1820 revolted against his cousin Motswasele (second of the name) because of his tyrannous conduct: he was said to 'eat up' his people's cattle and seize their wives. At a *letsholo* (tribal assembly) held at Sokwane he was assassinated.<sup>2</sup> Ignoring the rights of Motswasele's eldest son Sechele, then about ten years of age, Segokotlo, Motswasele's younger brother who had shared in the plot against him, claimed the chieftainship, but Moruakgomo refused to submit to him. "You told me to kill your elder brother", he said, "now I am going to reign." Segokotlo and his partisans were driven out; taking with them Motswasele's two young sons, Sechele and Kgosiidintsi, they fled northward into the country of the BaNgwato, while Moruakgomo moved his residence first to Molepolole, and then to Dithubaruba. It was therefore a house divided against itself that now faced assault; and Sebetwane seems to have had no great difficulty in over-running most of the

Forced by the MaTebele to retreat, the BaTaung, on 24 April 1824, destroyed the Methodist mission station at Makwasi, founded the previous year by Hodgson and Broadbent among a section of the BaRolong under Sefunelo. Sefunelo called in Griquas to aid in expelling the BaTaung and later (in August) a battle ensued at Phitshane on the Molopo river. This was called the Battle of Chiefs because both Mophethe, father of Moletsane, and Tshabadira, brother of Sefunelo were killed. The BaTaung retreated across the Vaal and about the end of 1825 beat off an attack by Griquas near the

modern Kroonstad. Thereafter they settled under Moshesh in Basutoland. S. M. Molema, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 ff. L. A. Hewson, *An Introduction to South African Methodists* (Cape Town, 1950), pp. 16 ff. At Makwasi (Maquassi) "the first European dwelling north of the Vaal was erected, and here the first European Transvaaler was born on July 1st, 1823".

<sup>1</sup> V. Ellenberger, 'History of the BaTlokwa of Gaberones' in *Bantu Studies*, 13, 3, September 1939, pp. 165 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ditirafalo*, pp. 44 ff.; *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 47.



country and compelling the inhabitants to pay tribute. Having driven Moruakgomo from Dithubaruba the MaKololo now occupied this stronghold in the Dithejwane hills. Perhaps they thought they had at last reached a permanent home; if so they soon found themselves mistaken.

Moruakgomo, with his uncle Tshosa, made his way south to the BaNgwaketse to propose an alliance to withstand the further inroads of the MaKololo. The BaNgwaketse were then the most formidable and most dreaded of the Tswana tribes. There was hardly one of the surrounding tribes that had not felt the weight of the heavy hand of Makaba (second of the name), their chief. He had the reputation of a mighty magician: it was said of him that by a word he could call elephants to his feet and summon fat cattle out of a hole in the earth. Early in his career (1798 or 1799) while living on the top of Kanye hill, which he had fortified by stone walls whose remains are still visible, he had beaten off a mixed commando of Griquas and others led by a notorious renegade European, Jan Bloem, 'a Prussian by birth': in spite of their firearms they could capture but few cattle. Some years later he had to withstand a fierce onslaught made by a confederacy of some ten tribes under the instigation of his uncle Moabi, whom he had sent into exile. He beat them off in a battle at a place named Matlhabanelo, on the top of Kanye hill.<sup>2</sup> Then early in 1823 he had been attacked at Tlhorong by the 'Mantatees' (i.e. MaPhuthing) previous to their descent upon Dithakong.<sup>3</sup> Robert Moffat visited him in August 1824 and found him living on the lofty hill Kgwa-kgwe, close to Kanye, the present capital of the tribe.<sup>4</sup> The town was of considerable extent; fourteen villages were visible from that height; Moffat estimated that on the lowest computation Makaba must rule seventy thousand people. The

chief seemed old, but was tall, strong and healthy. He related with great eloquence how he had repelled the 'Mantatee' horde, entrapping many hundreds of them by embuscades. Stretching forth his muscular arm in the direction of the field of conflict, he said: "There lie the bleached bones of the enemy who came upon our hills like locusts; but who melted before us by the shaking of the spear." Then, with stentorian voice and superlative self-complacency, he boasted: "Who is to be compared to Makaba, the son of Melita, the man of conquest?" Makaba, said Moffat, "is accustomed to conquer, so that he holds the nations around him in awe". It is evident that his boastings went somewhat beyond the truth; for he admitted to Moffat that the 'Mantatees' had first driven him from a fortified mountain and forced him to take refuge elsewhere.

Old Makaba, who thought himself invincible, was now to know the ignominy of defeat and to suffer a violent death. There are divergent accounts of what took place. It is said that a certain man named Mogongwa, who had incurred Makaba's displeasure, fled to Dithubaruba and by his report of the immense wealth of the BaNgwaketse in cattle incited Sebetwane to enrich himself at their expense. It is also said that when the MaKololo set out on the expedition a number of BaKwena accompanied them but secretly sent Makaba a message that they did not intend to fight him and would join in repelling the common enemy.<sup>5</sup> Makaba marched with his regiments to meet the invaders. They drove him out of the town of Melita (the modern Makolontwana) and joined battle at Losabanyana, a hill near the present road from Kanye to Moshaneng. Makaba's headmen had begged him to remain at home; he was old, they said, and should allow the younger men to win their laurels; but Makaba rejected their advice.

in the battle. Edwin Lloyd, who was in the service of the London Mission from 1884, wrote a stirring account of the battle but also confused MaTebele and MaKololo; he agrees that the BaKwena sat on the fence. (*Three great African Chiefs*, London, 1895, pp. 145 ff.) G.W. Stow (*op. cit.* p. 541) quotes a story told by Dr. Casalis to the effect that Sebege acted with base treachery by ordering the warriors under his command to refrain from fighting and allow the enemy to butcher the veterans; after this they attacked and drove Sebetwane off.

<sup>1</sup> *Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, I. Schapera's note, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ditirafalo*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 67, says the attack at Tlhorong was made by MaTebele of Ramabusetse.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, 1842), pp. 396 ff. *Apprenticeship at Kuruman*, pp. 134-144.

<sup>5</sup> *Ditirafalo*, pp. 44 ff., says it was BaFokeng ba ga Sebetwane and BaKwena who attacked Makaba; *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 57, says it was the MaTebele of MaPhathana and BaKwena, but the latter stood aside



He was a broken-hearted man. His favourite son Tshosa had rebelled against him and had been killed in spite of his father's orders to take him alive. Like David of old he mourned for his Absalom; he had lost his zest for life and cared not what happened. The BaKwena, including Moruakgomo, played him false. Instead of joining in the fight, they stood aside and watched Makaba's warriors being cut up; and after the battle many of them helped the MaKololo to round up the cattle. Sebege, Makaba's son, with two regiments also, it is said, held aloof. Makaba fought bravely but was killed. There is a story that he was slain by his own people who gathered about him and either by accident or design trampled him to death. At a critical moment Sebetwane had to throw himself into the thick of the fight and received wounds in the chest that, breaking out afresh, caused his death twenty-five years later.<sup>1</sup> Moruakgomo, Tshosa and many BaKwena retreated into the Kalahari and settled for some time in Ngamiland. Sebege, though not the rightful heir, his mother being the second wife in rank, succeeded to the chieftainship of the BaNgwaketse. The victorious MaKololo returned with their booty to Dithubaruba. All this happened in July 1826.

A month later Sebege was visited by two Europeans, Bain and Biddulph, who are said to have been the first men licensed by the Cape government to trade among the BaTswana.<sup>2</sup> They had crossed the Molopo river on 13 August, had advanced through a thick forest of camelthorn into open level tracts and then into a region of gentle undulations and more luxuriant vegetation.

They had passed through the valley – 'literally strewn with human skulls' – where the battle had been fought; and on the 20th reached Selokolela ('Silaqualaly' – near the present town of Kanye), a collection of miserable huts erected by the BaNgwaketse since their defeat. They found in Sebege a man above common growth and of prepossessing appearance, with features of a more

European than negro cast. He told them that he was in daily expectation of another assault by the MaKololo and that he proposed to forestall it by a surprise attack. He invited them to lend the powerful aid of their firearms. Bain objected that they were peaceful traders and would get into trouble with their government if they meddled in native wars, but Sebege insisted; in an authoritative tone he said: "You are now in my dominions and consequently under my orders." The BaNgwaketse 'pulled noses' (between finger and thumb) in place of shaking hands; and when after a day's reflection Bain and Biddulph consented to the chief's demands, Sebege and his councillors nearly pulled their noses off their faces, such was their joy. On the 25th the army of about 3,000 men set out for Dithubaruba, Bain on horseback, Biddulph on a riding-ox. They had with them five Africans bearing guns. The warriors were each armed with a battle-axe, a shield of white ox-hide and three or six assegais. They drew their rations from the dense herds of wild game, on one day killing 33 eland and other large animals, and seventy on another. Passing the old town of Melita, from which Makaba had been driven some weeks before, on the 27th they bivouacked in a thick wood a short distance from Dithubaruba. No fires were lighted that night. Sebege addressed his troops in stirring terms: "The honour of your country is now at stake!" he cried. Bain was astonished by the foresight and military skill displayed by the intrepid chief. At 4. a.m. on the 28th they entered a beautiful open vale leading to Dithubaruba. They paused while Sebege again called upon them to fight bravely and while detachments went to plug every pass in the surrounding hills. Then the main body encircled the town which lay in profound silence. The surprise was complete. A gun was fired and at this signal the warriors sent forth 'a most hellish war-whoop' and rushed upon the close-packed dwellings. Bain had made it a condition that he and his men should

Riebeeck Society Publications, No. 30), pp. 51 ff. Bain was a Scot who migrated to the Cape in 1816 and settled at Graaff Reinet. He won fame as a road engineer. In 1835 he accompanied, for part of the way, Dr Andrew Smith in his expedition. See *Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat* (London, 1945), p. 34.

<sup>1</sup> Livingstone (*Missionary Travels*, London, 1857, p. 89) says that Sebetwane died of inflammation of the lungs "which originated in and extended from an old wound, got at Melita".

<sup>2</sup> *The African Monthly*, vol. IV, June–November 1908, pp. 222, 345, 483. *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain*, edited by Margaret H. Lister (Cape Town, 1949, Van



fire only blank cartridges. There were not many guns – only seven – but the noise of brisk volleys reverberating among the hills was as tremendous as unexpected and caused a panic among the inhabitants. As they crept out of their huts they were, in large numbers, ruthlessly butchered with battle-axes. Many managed to escape by clambering up among the rocks on the hillsides. The whole town was soon in flames.

Bain had given his men strict orders not to take any lives. His interpreter disobeyed. "One poor boy about eight years of age", Bain wrote, "having lost his mother, came running towards us as if to seek protection, and my blood freezes still in my veins when I think of his reception." The interpreter clapped his blunderbus to the child's head and shot him dead.

This was probably the severest rebuff that Sebetwane ever knew. We may suppose that, incapacitated by wounds received at Losabanyana, he was unable to inspire his men by his commanding authority and personal courage. During his retirement their morale had declined and lulled by over-weening self-confidence they kept no watch for the advance of enemies. Only thus can we account for the conquest of the stronghold in the Dithejwane hills.

Sebego did not go in pursuit of the MaKololo but contented himself by rounding up their great herds of long-horned cattle. With these he retired to his own country. He was not allowed to enjoy his triumph for long. He made his home at Lwale and there received a demand from Mzilikazi for tribute in the form of white cattle. He submitted and the beasts he sent were so fine that they excited the cupidity of the MaTebele. Mzilikazi despatched an impi to strip the BaNgwaketse of their treasure. There ensued a fight at a place that is still named Matebeleng and Sebego was forced to retreat with many of his people into the

Kalahari desert. The MaTebele followed on their heels and numbers of them, tormented by heat and thirst, fell to the spears of the fugitives.<sup>1</sup> In 1842, contrary to the advice of David Livingstone, Sebego led his people back from Lake Ngami to their old home where the BaTlhaping, now in possession of guns, pounced upon them and they fled in dismay. In the following year Livingstone found them – that is to say, Sebego and a remnant – living among the BaKgatla. He was favourably impressed by the chief: "the bravest of all the Bechuanas". He died in 1844 and was buried at Segonyana, near Kuruman.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know whether Sebetwane rebuilt his town at Dithubaruba after the conflagration or whether he established his headquarters elsewhere. But it is evident that the advance of the MaTebele, following upon his defeat by the BaNgwaketse, in which white men had played so decisive a part, induced him to look further north for his tranquil abode. This meant that he must treat with, or conquer, the large and important tribe of BagaMmaNgwato (BaNgwato, for short). To them we must now direct attention.

At this point it is more than ever difficult to trace the sequence of events – to fit together the pieces of our jig-saw puzzle.

## 5

The chief of the BaNgwato at this time was Kgari who had succeeded his father, Kgama II, in about 1810. In the opinion of John Mackenzie he was all that the BaTswana desire their chief to be – brave in the field, wise in the council, kind to his vassals.<sup>3</sup> Under his sway the tribe exerted great influence and at this period he was probably at the height of his powers.

At Serowe, his capital, he harboured the Kwenana refugees, Segokotlo and Motswasele's sons, Sebego now possessed guns, would certainly attack him. In spite of this warning Sebego left the desert and he was assailed and defeated by the BaTlhaping. In February 1843 Livingstone visited him where, with some of his people, he was living among the BaKgatla. (D. Chamberlain, *Some Letters from Livingstone*, Oxford, 1940, pp. 50 ff., 87 f.)

<sup>3</sup> John Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 358.

<sup>1</sup> A LeTebele named Lingap, one of Captain Harris's men in 1836, had served in this impi sent against Sebego and which pursued him into the desert. *The Wild Sports of Southern Africa*, London, 1839, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> In 1842 when Livingstone was visiting the BaKwena Sebego (Sebehwe) sent to ask his advice about returning to his own country; the malaria of Ngamiland was playing havoc with his people. By that time the MaTebele had retired from the Transvaal to the north, but Livingstone warned Sebego that the BaTlhaping who



chele and Kgosi dintsi. He had a particular interest in young Sechele, heir to the Kwena chieftainship; and felt an obligation to obtain for him his rights as head of the 'mother' tribe of the Ba-Tswana. The fact that his wife Dibeelane (mother of Sekgoma) was of that tribe no doubt influenced him. According to one tradition Kgari actually invited Sebetwane to intervene on Sechele's behalf. If he ever entertained such an intention it must have been frustrated by Sebetwane's hostile actions. He sent, or conducted, several raiding parties against the BaNgwato and at least one against the BaKaa at Shoshong. Kgari was driven from Serowe into the shelter of the Kutswe hills.

It appears that the MaKololo were reinforced by two groups coming from the far south. G. E. Nettleton in *Ditirafalo* describes them as "*MaTebele a ga Mapene* and *MaTebele a ga Molapo*" and identifies the former with the people of Ramabusetsa. Here again 'MaTebele' does not indicate the followers of Mzilikazi. Chief Kgama III in his contribution to *Dico tsa Secwana* makes this clear when he writes: "The BaSotho, so-called bo-Mantatisi or MaTebele, who came here are ba-ga-Sebetwane, ba-ga-Mabusetsa, ba-ga-Molapwe."<sup>3</sup> Nettleton says it was Ramabusetsa who drove Kgari from Serowe and that the two bodies combined attacked Kgari at the Kutswe hills.<sup>1</sup>

Be that as it may, Kgari, in this eventful year 1826, made a fateful decision that cost him his life and almost ruined his tribe. He decided to lead an assault on the MaKalanga, a people living in the Matopo hills in what is now Southern Rhodesia. Various reasons are alleged for this action. John

Mackenzie ascribed it to lust of conquest.<sup>2</sup> Some of the MaKalanga were already acknowledging Kgari's supremacy by paying tribute, but others maintained their independence and it was to subdue these that Kgari set out on this expedition. Others say that at this time the BaNgwato were short of food and that the purpose of the raid was to refill their larders. It may also be that the advance of the MaTebele and the menace of the MaKololo induced Kgari to move northwards. Whatever the motive may have been, he set out (as Mackenzie says) "with the strength and flower of his tribe" and with some of the BaKaa from Shoshong. The women and cattle were left at Mpateng on the Shashi river.<sup>3</sup> Sechele accompanied Kgari but as he had not yet been initiated into manhood he was excluded from the regiments and remained with the cattle.

When the army entered a valley of the Matopos the MaKalanga were well prepared to withstand them. Their young regiments made a brave show and skilfully retreated drawing their foes forward until, a pre-arranged signal being given, they turned to attack. Meanwhile a veteran regiment had assailed the Ngwato reserves who were under Kgari's direct command. These were taken by surprise and overwhelmed; the veterans then attacked the other BaNgwato from the rear. The battle has been well called the Flodden of the BaNgwato, for just as in the one conflict King James and the flower of the Scottish nobility were left dead on the field, so in the other, Kgari, four of his brothers – Ramabua, Mampae, Morapedi and Tshisi<sup>4</sup> – and many other leaders pe-

<sup>1</sup> *Ditirafalo*, pp. 74 f.; *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 56. Ramabusetsa is an enigmatic figure. As we have seen (note I, p. 52) Ellenberger says that a chief of that name and Lekapetsa (is he identifiable with Molapo?) joined Sebetwane. In the same note it is said that a Ramabusetsa was in the Transvaal in about 1831. *Dico tsa Secwana* (p. 67) says it was 'Matebele' of Ramabusetsa who attacked the BaNgwaketse at Tlhorong before 1824. If this is the chief who now appeared among the BaNgwato in 1826 something must be wrong about the dating, unless we suppose that after the fighting at Kutswe Ramabusetsa returned to the Transvaal and then in about 1831 went north again and joined Sebetwane. This is hardly likely. An alternative is to prolong the stay of the MaKololo beyond 1831 and postpone the date of the Kalanga expedition till that year. Or we may suppose that the two Sotho chiefs arrived after Sebetwane had gone north, attacked the BaNgwato

and then went on to join him in Ngamiland; in which case *Ditirafalo* must be in error in stating that they attacked Kgari, for he was already dead.

<sup>2</sup> John Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. J. H. L. Burns, who was in L.M.S. service in Bechuanaland, 1923-41, has kindly given me notes of the reminiscences of a remarkable old man named Senau Ditsela, a MoKaa of Kalamare in the Mahalapye district, who died in 1945 at the reputed age of 138. He was a few months older than Kgari's son Sekgoma and went as a herd-boy on the Matopo expedition as far as the Shashi river. Sechele, he says, also went as a non-combatant for, like Senau, he was not yet initiated. Senau was later captured by the MaTebele and trained as a warrior: he was in their army which attacked Moshesh at Thaba Bosiu (Basutoland) in 1831.

<sup>4</sup> *Ditirafalo*, p. 75.



ished. Kgari was buried near where, seventy-six years later, the grave of Cecil Rhodes was hewn out of the solid granite of the Matopos. Only a remnant of the Ngwato army escaped to straggle back to where the women and cattle had been left at the Shashi river. Once across the Ma-tlaotse (Macloutsi) river they were safe from attack by the MaKalanga; and after camping for some time at Bobyanyane, in a sandy plain north of the hill Mmamoloki, they went on to the Kutswe hills, some twenty-five miles south of Serowe. Serowe, the old home of the tribe, was apparently too vulnerable a spot at which to settle, for it was open to attack from the north and from the south. Kutswe was a safer locality. From there they could, if need be, conveniently withdraw into the desert.

"The tribe", says John Mackenzie, "may be said at this time to have been nearly destroyed." Of Kgari's surviving sons, Sekgoma and Kgama had not yet been initiated into manhood; the former was the elder by a year but his mother was inferior in rank to Kgama's. Kgama was therefore the rightful heir but until he could assume the chiefship (as he did in 1833) his uncle Sedimo acted as regent.

It was while the BaNgwato were in this weakened condition that the MaKololo invaded their territory in force. The date is uncertain. Towards the end of 1829 Robert Moffat travelled from Kuruman to visit Mzilikazi who was then living near the site of the modern city of Pretoria. While he was there an ambassador arrived from the BaNgwato to solicit the aid of the MaTebele against "a neighbouring tribe which had taken their cattle". His country, he told Moffat, was in a desolate state from the repeated attacks of the 'Matabele' (*sic*) and that "nearly half of the Ba-mangwato, with many other tribes, had fled to the

Great Lake". Here again we should read 'Ma-Kololo' for 'Matebele'.<sup>1</sup> From this we may reasonably suppose that it was in 1829 Sebetwane invaded the BaNgwato and compelled this retreat to the neighbourhood of Lake Ngami.

Marching north from the vicinity of Dithubaruba, past Lophephe (where they are said to have had a fight with the BaKwena)<sup>2</sup> and east of the Marutlwe hills near Shoshong, the MaKololo rested at the Bonwanotsi hills,<sup>3</sup> crossed the Magalaphwe (Mahalapye) river, and fell upon the BaNgwato at the Kutswe hills.

It was after this defeat that the BaNgwato sought refuge in the northern region. Passing by Serowe and halting (it is said) at Mhisa, on the present road from Serowe to Lake Ngami, they entered upon the two-hundred-mile trail that led to the Botletle river through sandy desert where only at rare intervals could water be found in pits, and that scantily. For two-thirds of the year there is practically no surface water whatever. Even for a small party travel there is arduous enough. For a company numbering hundreds – or thousands – it was a perilous adventure: even the *tsamma* melons, the food and drink of migratory Bushmen, would in all their profusion be insufficient to shake the thirst – granted there were melons at that season. The trek-Boers who in 1876 attempted to pass this way left the track littered with bones and debris of wagons, and few survived.<sup>4</sup> What it meant to the great mass of the Ngwato refugees as they plunged forward – men, women, children, herds and flocks – beggars imagination. What casualties they suffered history records not; but eventually the survivors reached the Botletle river (Livingstone's 'Zouga', a local name) flowing eastward to the great Makgadikgadi saltpan. They crossed it and went on to Olodiphephe – 'the place of ant-heaps'.

<sup>1</sup> *The Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat*, vol. I, pp. 17 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Dico tsa Setswana*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> The name Bonwanotsi ('where bees drink') does not appear on the maps; perhaps it is an alternative for Bonwapitse ('where zebras drink').

<sup>4</sup> Commenting upon Livingstone and Oswell's journey across this tract in 1849, Frank Debenham (*The Way to Ilala*, London, 1955, p. 44) writes: "On this, the first passage made by a white man, dependent upon eighty oxen and twenty horses, they were fortunate

in finding water, but in later years there were many tragedies due to its absence, the most notable being those of a party of Boers in 1876. It was really a case of the capacity of the waterholes, most of them being ample for a small party of men on foot, sorely taxed when the travellers had oxen with them, and hopelessly inadequate for a trek such as the Boers attempted with their families and stock". In the Kalahari, Bushmen spend the dry season literally living on the *tsamma*, moving from patch to patch and not seeing water as such for months on end: it is both food and drink.



Sebetwane and his people, numbering some thousands, followed in the tracks of the BaNgwato and no doubt suffered the same hardships. They crossed the Botletle at the Shoa salt-pan<sup>1</sup> but did not overtake the BaNgwato. It is said that a Mo-Tswana, who had been taken prisoner and forced to act as guide, led them astray into a waterless tract and then disappeared. The cattle, mad with thirst, stampeded, and some of them found their way back to their former owners, the BaKwena at Lophephe. Sebetwane made up his losses by raiding the villages of the BaTletli (as Livingstone calls the local inhabitants) who possessed large herds of long-horned, long-legged cattle. He then abandoned pursuit of the BaNgwato, recrossed the Botletle at a drift still known as Sebetwane's Ford and made himself master of the country around Lake Kamadow (Dow), between Tsienyane (Rakops) and Mopopi, with Kedia Hill as his headquarters. There the MaKololo seem to have settled for some considerable time – for several years, indeed.

When they learnt of Sebetwane's movement in that direction the BaNgwato returned to their ancient home at Serowe in the south. It is said that when Sebetwane went north he had with him as captive Sekgoma, son of Kgari, but at some point he managed to escape and return to his people.

Sebetwane found on the Botletle the BaTlokwa who had remained there after their flight from him and the BaNgwato (see p. 57). He entered into a compact with them by which they were to join him and he was to restore the cattle they had lost. Some of the BaTlokwa, however, were dissatisfied with the cattle allotted to them and, led by Basha – brother of Lesage the regent – they stole away and departed for the Transvaal with Matlapeng, the heir to the chiefship. Lesage and the rest threw in their lot with Sebetwane, thus augmenting his forces.<sup>2</sup>

We must at this point follow the fortunes of those BaKwena who were separated from Moruakgomo, the usurper. Segokotlo, with Sechele and Kgositintsi and others, had been living among the BaKaa at Shoshong. When their hosts were driven from there the BaKwena moved to Lophephe on the border between Kwena and Ngwato territory. There they were attacked by 'Matebele' (so *Ditirafalo* reports: probably Sebetwane's raiders or Ramabusetsa's) and took refuge at Letlhakeng, a sort of fertile oasis in the Kalahari. They fell in with Moruakgomo and his followers who were on their way back from Ngamiland. A reconciliation between the two parties was effected and together they returned to Kwena territory and settled at Dirutheng, near the Mahalapye river. Sechele, now about 17 years of age, was still not acknowledged chief. Tradition relates that a raiding party of BaNgwato from Maleke behind the Kutswe hills, encountered and robbed some Kwena women; their menfolk retaliated by a raid on Ngwato cattle-posts. The Ngwato ruler, presumably not feeling strong enough to make war on the BaKwena, sent to invite Sebetwane's assistance; and Sebetwane set out with an army from the Botletle across the thirstland, fell upon Dirutheng, killed Moruakgomo and Tshosa, took all the cattle, and carried Sechele captive to the north. When the BaNgwato learned what had taken place they despatched Kgama, heir to the chiefship, to Sebetwane for the purpose of securing Sechele's release. Sebetwane accepted a ransom of four leopard skins and a number of beads and bracelets and Sechele was taken back to the BaNgwato.

To this account given in *Ditirafalo*<sup>3</sup> some picturesque details are added by R. S. Kgama in his *Sengwato History* and by David Livingstone, who was in a position to hear the story from both Sebetwane and Sechele. The former states that the Chief Kgari sent a man named Mosadioa-mataupana to call in Sebetwane and on his arrival

<sup>1</sup> On some maps the Shoa pan is shown as the western part of the Makgadikgadi.

<sup>2</sup> V. Ellenberger in *Ditirafalo*, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> I. Schapera in *Ditirafalo*, p. 46. The *Sengwato History* by Rampodi Segolodi Kgama is a manuscript

in the possession of the Rev. A. Sandilands of Kanye. The author was a member of the royal house and lived for some years in Ngamiland; he was well versed in tribal tradition. A translated copy of relevant passages was made for me by Obueng Moonwa of Sefhare.



said to him: "There is a boy called Sechele, who is tall; when you fight, do not kill him; bring him to me." Livingstone indicates that Sebetwane's help was solicited, not for retaliating on the BaKwena but to enable Sechele to gain his rightful position as chief of that tribe. Sebetwane, he says, surrounded the Kwena town by night; "and just as it began to dawn his herald proclaimed in a loud voice that he had come to revenge the death of Mochoasele. This was followed by Sebetwane's people beating loudly on their shields all round the town. The panic was tremendous, and the rush like that from a theatre on fire, while the Makololo used their javelins on the terrified Bakwains with a dexterity which they alone can employ."<sup>1</sup> Sebetwane had given orders to spare Sechele and Kgosidintsi; but, says R. S. Kgama, when Sechele was brought before Sebetwane he was bleeding from a wound in the head. The Chief demanded who had done this thing, but knowing that confession would mean instant death, no man would own up. Sebetwane handed Sechele to Kgari together with other captives, the rest of whom he retained for himself. After various other vicissitudes Sechele ultimately succeeded in gaining his rights and united the BaKwena into a strong tribe under his rule. When telling Livingstone the story "he expatiated on the far-famed generosity of that really great man", Sebetwane. Incidentally it may be observed that the incident has been of great importance in African history, for what Sechele told Livingstone prompted him to visit Sebetwane and this was the first step in the opening up of South Central Africa to western civilization.

These stories are undoubtedly true in substance

but they present difficulties derived from the inconsistencies of tribal tradition.

Edwin Lloyd<sup>2</sup> agrees with R. S. Kgama that it was Kgari who was concerned in ransoming Sechele: this information was evidently obtained from the old man named Rratwane (alive in 1886) whom Kgari sent to bring back the rescued MoKwena. Sebele (son of Sechele) in his contribution to *Dico tsa Secwana*, confirms that Kgari had a hand in the affair.<sup>3</sup> This implies that Sebetwane's capture of Sechele and the death of Moruakgomo happened before Kgari's death; but this is inconsistent with what we have related of Moruakgomo's movements: clearly he did not return from Ngamiland and become reconciled with Segokotlo's party till after Kgari's death. It does not rule out the possibility that Kgari, before his fatal expedition to the Matopos, had interested Sebetwane in Sechele's claims, and that Sebetwane's response had been delayed.

G. E. Nettleton in *Ditirafalo*<sup>4</sup> relates that when Sebetwane was going through Ngwato country on his way to the Botletle after the death of Kgari he already held Sechele a captive, and that the BaNgwato (? Sedimo, the regent) sent Kgama, the heir to the chiefship, to ransom Sechele at Shua. And *Dico tsa Secwana*<sup>5</sup> says that it was at Lophephe (not Dirutleng) that Sechele was knocked on the head and almost killed. It was then that Sebetwane helped him. The attack apparently took place when Sebetwane (see ante p. 62) was marching north from, or near, Dithubaruba to the Ngwato country. This, we should say, is what really happened. It is very difficult to believe that after the MaKololo had once traversed the thirstland to the Botletle Sebetwane would

<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels* (London, 1857), pp. 14 f. A. Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (London, 1952), p. 108 n.; and *Sechele*, (Oxford, 1954), p. 64, points out discrepancies between the Tswana accounts of this affair and Livingstone's. "Tribal tradition", he says, "so detailed and circumstantial, seems much the more probable . . ." Unfortunately, as shown in the text, the traditions are contradictory. In saying that Sechele was *reinstated* in his chieftainship Livingstone certainly used the wrong word; up to that date Sechele had not been installed chief and so could not be *reinstated*. What Sebetwane did was to remove an obstacle in his path by killing Moruakgomo.

The evidence is strong that it was Kgari who intervened on Sechele's behalf, though Sillery does not

accept it. Some inconsistency would be removed if it could be shown that Moruakgomo's return from Ngamiland, his reconciliation with Segokotlo and their settlement at Dirutheng (or Lophephe) and Moruakgomo's death at the hand of Sebetwane, all took place before Kgari's death in the Matopos, and not after it as appears in Sillery's reconstruction of the traditions.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Lloyd, *Three great African Chiefs* (London, 1895), p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Ditirafalo*, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Dico tsa Secwana*, p. 48. It looks as if the paragraph beginning *Ga twe*, 'it is said', and describing the attack on Lophephe, were by a hand other than Sebele's.

lead an army back again, some 500 miles, to oblige the BaNgwato, whether to rescue Sechele or to avenge their loss of a score or two of cattle.

If only to question its truth we may here introduce a story that is told about Sebetwane and David Livingstone by M. François Coillard, the eminent French missionary who founded the Paris Mission among the BaRotse.<sup>1</sup> He relates that in December 1900 Katusi, the father-in-law of Litia (son and successor of Lewanika, paramount chief of the BaRotse) told him that he had known Livingstone at Mabotsa (i.e. in 1843) just after he escaped the lion. Before this – Katusi went on to say – Livingstone was at Sechele's town and one morning was aroused by tumultuous noise – the MaKololo had invested it that night and were now pillaging and killing. Livingstone saw a man crawling out of a hut and, giving vent to his indignation, whacked him good and hard on the back with a whip of rhinoceros hide – a sjambok. The man leapt to his feet, seized Livingstone by the hair and threw him to the ground. It was Sebetwane himself! Warriors were about to spear Livingstone to death but Sebetwane intervened: "Let him go", he said, "He is a white man, a stranger." And, looking straight at his assailant, he continued: "You have courage. You are a brave man. Never before has any man dared to strike Sebetwane." Once feelings had cooled, peace was made between them. Livingstone gave the chief £3 as an *amende honorable*, and the chief presented him with five oxen. Seven years later when they met on the Chobe they joked about it. "You are strong to have taken me by the hair and thrown me", said one. "And you are a great warrior to attack Sebetwane all alone who has conquered so many tribes. Look

at these scars on my back! You are the only man who has ever beaten me."

It is a good story – *ben trovato se non vero*. It is true that Livingstone was in a town of Sechele at various times between 1841 and 1846, but he never writes of seeing Sebetwane before they met in 1851. Nor is there any reference in tribal tradition to attack by MaKololo on the Tswana tribes so late as the forties. We take the story, therefore, to be apocryphal. Perhaps it is a perversion of the Sebetwane-Sechele incident.

7

When they marched again from Kedia Hill the MaKololo crossed the Botletle and went along its well-wooded left bank to where the river Thamalakane, coming from the north-east, flows into it. They crossed at the junction (Dikgatlong or Makgatlo-a-dinoka) and followed the Ngabhe channel to Lake Ngami. In these days the lake has disappeared; but then it was a noble sheet of water.<sup>2</sup> They skirted the northern shore – then a dead flat sandy expanse, now covered with camelthorn forest.

They had now arrived in the country of the BaTawana, an offshoot of the BaNgwato, who about 1800 A.D. were led by their chief Tawana to the Kgwebe hills, a few miles south-east of the lake. They drove out, or merged with, the BaKgalagadi whom they found in possession. After reigning twenty years Tawana died of wounds received in a fight against partisans of his son Moremi, who succeeded him.

We can only conjecture the date of Sebetwane's arrival. When Dr. Andrew Smith was in the Marico, February 1835, he was told by a man

distributary of the great Okavango swamp, but this channel is now blocked by vegetation (sudd) – this being the cause of the Lake's drying up. Water from the swamp is diverted to other channels. On the east much of it flows down the Thamalakane and into the Botletle, its continuation. The Nghabe, connecting this stream with the Lake, Debenham describes as "puzzling". When there is a really large flood some water flows along it into Ngami and then later returns into the Botletle. "To say the least of it, rivers which do these things are somewhat confusing". (*Kalahari Sand*, p. 93.) "The Nghabe is in fact a two-way river." (*The Way to Ilala*, p. 51.)

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Mackintosh, *Coillard of the Zambezi* (London, 1907), p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> The geography of the region is well described by Frank Debenham in *Kalahari Sand* (London, 1953) and *The Way to Ilala* (London, 1955). In the latter, p. 50, he writes of Lake Ngami: "It was exactly a century after Livingstone and Oswell had stared across the fifteen miles of water that the writer, in a convoy of four lorries, drove right across the 'lake' through grassy plains, the home of some thousands of Damara people, possessing some score of thousands of their long-horned cattle as well as sheep and goats." The Lake was formerly fed by the Taoghe, the westernmost



named Petswa, who had recently returned from the Lake, that he was there when Sebetwane appeared. We do not know how long Petswa stayed at the Lake: perhaps we shall not be far wrong if we say that the MaKololo reached Lake Ngami in 1834.<sup>1</sup>

The news of the steady approach of the invaders along the northern shore of Lake Ngami caused much commotion among the BaTawana. Moremi's younger brother, Mocwakhumo, led some of the people in flight along the Okavango river into Angola, where their descendants are said to survive to this day.<sup>2</sup> Moremi moved with his fighting-men from Kgwebe to Motlhaba-wa-namanyana, a sandy eminence on the western side of the Lake and there joined battle with the MaKololo. Moremi was defeated. He fled with the bulk of his people northwards along the Taoghe river, crossed it at Ntale and built a village at Kabamokone on the eastern bank. After living there some time the BaTawana moved eastwards to the Chobe river and established themselves at a place named Tshoroga<sup>3</sup> - later to be named Dinyanti.

Sebetwane was now master of Ngamiland. It would seem to offer him everything his heart desired - security, water, pasture - but he was evidently not satisfied. After remaining some time (how long we cannot tell) he gave orders to march again. It is said that, having heard of white men living on the Atlantic coast, he conceived a desire to enter into communication with them. Be that as it may, he led his great host, again and again augmented by the incorporation of captives, to the south-west through thickly wooded country to the region of Ghanzi where in after years a Boer settlement was to be planted. How much further they went it is impossible to say. It is possible they reached the dry watercourse of the Otjomonde river. Between that river and Ghanzi the traveller Charles John Andersson, who in 1853 penetrated to Lake Ngami from Walvisch Bay,

found a vast number of 'sand-wells' - pits varying from one to three fathoms in depth, with an average width of twenty feet. "The construction of these pits", he wrote, "indicated great perseverance and had evidently been formed by a pastoral people possessed of large herds of cattle. No European would ever have dreamt of looking for water in such localities, since it usually lay ten feet below the surface of the ground, which gave no indication whatever of its presence."<sup>4</sup> It is tempting to see in these pits a trace of the passage of the MaKololo sixteen or seventeen years before Andersson saw them.

Two reasons are assigned for the retreat of the MaKololo from this inhospitable region. Livingstone, repeating what Sebetwane told him, says it was lack of water that turned them back. In the last of the sand-well water was so scanty that Sebetwane had to decide which should have the priority - his people or the cattle: there was not enough for all. He decided that people were more valuable than cattle. "Let the people drink", he ordered, "if the cattle perish we can fight for more." In the morning they woke to find that the cattle had disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

Ellenberger alleges that the MaKololo turned back because of the hostile attitude of the inhabitants - 'the Matama', i.e. Matlamma, 'Damaras', Hereros - who hid in the grass and bushes and continually harassed the invaders with poisoned arrows. The mention of these weapons suggests Bushmen rather than Hereros. Among their victims was Sebetwane's little son Kgwanane, aged about ten, who on the march was usually carried by one of the men. One would not suppose that a warrior who had fought his way through so many tribes would retreat in the face of Bushmen, or even of Hereros who could not have been very numerous; but the lack of water, the loss of his cattle and the death of his son were enough to dishearten Sebetwane and his people.

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Nettleton, 'History of the Ngamiland Tribes up to 1926', in *Bantu Studies*, December 1934, is of opinion that Sebetwane arrived about 1826. This could be correct only on the supposition that his residence and defeat at Dithubaruba were subsequent to his reaching Ngamiland, for, as we have seen, he was attacked at Dithubaruba in August 1826. It seems unlikely that having once reached the Lake he would

recross the desert southward. V. Ellenberger puts the date as 1827.

<sup>2</sup> G. E. Nettleton, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> This is not to be confused with the Tsotsoroga Pan described by Debenham, lying east of the Chobe River and the Mababe depression.

<sup>4</sup> C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami* (London, 1856), p. 380.

<sup>5</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 85.

So, foiled once again in his search for a permanent home, Sebetwane – “poorer than he started”, Livingstone says – led the MaKololo back to Lake Ngami. He now determined to press northward. The country ahead was “one succession of swamps, lakes, rivulets and quagmires”<sup>1</sup> – the delta of the Okavango. Ascending the Taoghe river to a point opposite the Tsodilo hills, they then struck eastwards, perhaps along the Makwegana (or Selinda) Spillway, to the Chobe (Linyanti), a tributary of the Zambezi. So they came to Tsoroga, the town which Moremi and his BaTawana had built near this stream. The MaKololo surrounded it by night and delivered their attack at dawn. Moremi had died of smallpox since leaving Lake Ngami. His heir, Letsholathebe, was a small boy and Sedumedi (Moremi’s eldest son by an inferior wife) was acting as regent. He and his brother Meno were taken captive. The surviving BaTawana settled down for a time as subjects of Sebetwane.

Tribal tradition alleges that afterwards Sebetwane determined to massacre the BaTawana.<sup>2</sup> A warning was conveyed to them by a woman and many of them, led by one Mogalakwe, made their escape and returned to the Lake. Sedumedi and others who remained were, it is said, murdered by Sebetwane’s orders. Another version of the story is that after two years of subjection the BaTawana determined to throw off the yoke and with one accord betook themselves to flight. Sebetwane, it is said, pursued them in vain. Whichever

is the true account, some BaTawana certainly found their way back to their old home. Livingstone found Letsholathebe ruling them in 1849.

The MaKololo lived long enough in the Chobe region to be convinced of its insalubrity – being subject to periodical flooding it was a hotbed of malaria. The decision was made to move again, and to move still further north. They followed the Chobe to its junction with the Zambezi which they crossed near the Mambove rapids, not far from Kazungula. This happened in about 1840.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining eleven years of Sebetwane’s life were occupied in reducing and ruling the tribes in the western districts of what we now name Northern Rhodesia and in contesting with MaTebele and AmaZulu the sovereignty of those regions.

## 8

An occasion for invading the country was offered by an invitation to intervene in a local quarrel.<sup>4</sup> The MaSubiya and the MaLeya, two of the tribes, were in conflict and Sundano, chief of the former, enlisted Sebetwane’s support. Mosokotwane, the head of some BaTonga who lived on the island of Kalai, volunteered to ferry the MaKololo over the river in his dug-out canoes. Sebetwane, with his habitual sagacity, kept him in one canoe with himself until all his people and cattle were safely landed on the northern bank.

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Andersson, *op. cit.*, p. 494

<sup>2</sup> So Nettleton, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The date is conjectural. Writing in 1855 from Dinyanti Livingstone said the MaKololo “have not been twenty years in this quarter”, but he does not say when they went north. (D. Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 243). Captain Bertrand, *The Kingdom of the Barotsi*, (London, 1899), p. 271, probably reporting the opinion of the French missionaries, says 1840. Vivien Ellenberger (personal communication, 26 March 1950) would assign Sebetwane’s residence at Dinyanti probably to 1829–30 and his crossing the Zambezi to 1831. He bases his opinion on a remark by M. Coillard (*On the Threshold of Central Africa*, footnote, p. 66) that Sebetwane “invaded and subjugated the Barotsi country a generation or two before Livingstone’s day”. “If”, Ellenberger writes, “one takes the ordinary meaning of the word and counts back, say 20 years, from the year in which Livingstone met Sebetwane the result is 1831.” He puts in 1831 the first attack by the MaTebele on the MaKololo, but, since Mzilikazi did not leave the

Transvaal before 1837, this implies that Mzilikazi sent an impi from there all the way to beyond the Zambezi, which seems improbable. According to A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, (London, 1939), p. 439, Mzilikazi settled in Southern Rhodesia “about the year 1840”; and it is not impossible that the nearer approach of the MaTebele (whose scouts are said to have reached Lake Ngami about that time) was one of the reasons why Sebetwane crossed the Zambezi.

<sup>4</sup> For the adventures of Sebetwane north of the Zambezi I am much indebted to A. Jalla, *Litaba tsa sechaba sa Marotse*, a history of the BaRotse in the vernacular. I also rely upon traditions collected by myself; see *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920) vol. I, pp. 28–32. One informant was an old man who as a boy was captured at Longo’s town by Sebetwane; he subsequently accompanied Livingstone to Loanda, was with him when he discovered the Victoria Falls and went on as far as Zumbo. He related many stories about the battles in which he engaged.



Thereafter he led his people eastwards to the vicinity of Mosi-wa-thunya (Victoria Falls). When they ascended from the bed of the Zambezi to the highlands above they found themselves in a world vastly different from that to which they had long been accustomed. The heavy sands of the thirst-lands and the swamps of the Okavango and Chobe gave place to undulating plains and open valleys rich in pasturage, fertile soil and perennial streams, bracing air and cool nights. A paradise indeed, they thought it, where cattle could flourish and women bear strong healthy children. But it was not empty of human beings. In 1855 Livingstone observed vestiges of vanished villages all along his path across the plateau. In 1840, to all appearances, it was thickly populated, by African standards. If the MaKololo were to enjoy a tranquil residence in that fair land they must bring the tribes into subjection. These peoples were not united under a single paramount chief and one by one they were brought under the yoke without any great difficulty.

It is said that in the vicinity of the Victoria Falls Sebetwane encountered one section of Ba-Tonga prepared for battle; he defeated them and captured so many cattle that the flocks of sheep and goats were of no account. In another fight Monze, the priest-chief of a second Tonga section, was killed. Then for a time the MaKololo settled at Kapoli, on the Kalomo river, at an altitude of over 5,000 feet. They had another temporary abode on the Mozuma river, two or three days march to the east, where in 1855 Livingstone saw heaps of cattle-bones.

On the sand-ridges and in the great flat plain on either side of the Kafue (a tributary of the Zambezi) lived the Balla (nicknamed Mashukulumbwe) with their enormous herds of small shapely cattle - a people that inspired all their neighbours with dread. Sebetwane now led his

warriors against them, mainly, one imagines, for the purpose of enlarging his herds. He found them a tough nut to crack. But there was no unity among them, and in spite of the resistance and the counter-attacks of sections of the tribe Sebetwane cut his way through them. He compelled the riverine BaTwa to ferry his men across the Kafue at Kasenga and raided as far north as the BaSala whose chieftainness Longo (a famous magician) he took captive. Recrossing the Kafue the MaKololo settled for a time on the Nkala river, in the vicinity of the hills of Nakalomwe and the hot spring.<sup>1</sup>

They had now to encounter a more formidable foe than BaTonga and Balla.

Mzilikazi and his MaTebele had in 1837 been driven from the Transvaal by the AmaZulu of Dingane and the Boer Voortrekkers. Marching north between the Madikwe and Notwani rivers and then along the left bank of the Limpopo they came by way of its tributary, the Umzingwani, into a broken, rugged region, a sea of tumbled granite, and then into an undulating park-like area covered with long grass. They had arrived in what we call Southern Rhodesia.

In his romanticized story of Lobengula, son of Mzilikazi, Marshall Hole tells that when the MaTebele reached the Matopo hills Mzilikazi consulted the oracle of Mwari (Ngwale nkolo) the great god of the MaKalanga.<sup>2</sup> The message came through the lips of an old priest. "Beyond the Zambezi", he declared, "there are villages so numerous that they cannot be counted. In every village there is a herd of fat cattle. Their king has a great store of ivory, for elephants are there as plentiful as hares." "So they have a king!" said Mzilikazi. "Yes, their king is Sebetwane who came from Kuruman many moons ago and he has eaten up all the chiefs near the river". "That is the man who gave us the slip once before in the Tswana

and spring are marked on Livingstone's map, though too far to the east. In 'Nakalombo' we may recognize the name Nakalomwe which the Balla give to the district, west of Namwala, where are situate the only hot springs in that part of Northern Rhodesia. It was there, on the Nkala river, that the Methodist Mission was planted by Messrs Buckenham and Baldwin in 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh Marshall Hole, *Lobengula* (London, 1929), pp. 49 ff.

<sup>1</sup> In December 1855, at a point near the Kafue river, Livingstone's guide, Sekwebu, pointed in a westerly direction towards a district where Sebetwane formerly dwelt. He spoke of a hot fountain on the hills there, named 'Nakalombo' and said: "There had your molekane [friend], i.e. Sebetwane] been alive he would have brought you to live with him. You would be on the bank of the river, and by taking canoes you would at once sail down to the Zambezi and visit the white people at the sea" (*Missionary Travels*, p. 568). The hills

country and took some of my cattle", said Mzilikazi. "Good! This time he shall not escape. I will teach him who is greater, he or I." This happened in about 1840.

Mzilikazi now ordered his regiments of married men to remain with the women and children, build villages and till fields while he went off with two younger regiments numbering some 5,000 warriors.<sup>1</sup> They first raided the BaNgwato in the Tswapong hills east of Serowe and then pressed on into the region east of the Makgadikgadi pan and stayed for some time on the Nata river. Then, travelling northwards, they reached the junction of the Gwaai and Khami rivers, and raiding parties were sent out, one of which attacked the people of Zanke (Wankie); a second went to Pandamatenga and a third to the Victoria Falls. It is said that one detachment spied out the land as far as Lake Ngami.

During Mzilikazi's absence his chief induna, Unombata, who had been left in charge, had endless trouble. The town of Gibigxegu newly-built seethed with dissension and the intrigues of jealous rivals. Then, to the consternation of all, a report was received from Bushmen that Mzilikazi had met his death in a fight with Sebetwane – that, indeed, the whole army was killed to the last man. Some indunas decided to proclaim Nkulumané, son of Mzilikazi, as chief. At this juncture Mzilikazi suddenly appeared on the scene with the remnant of the White Shields regiment. The plotting indunas were tried for high treason and executed.<sup>2</sup>

Whether or no it is true that Mzilikazi set out

with the deliberate intention of crushing Sebetwane and taking possession of the northern lands, there seems to be no reason for doubting that both he and later his son Lobengula nourished the ambition of extending their sway beyond the Zambezi.<sup>3</sup> It was only Sebetwane's military skill that thwarted their purpose. What we have described was a reconnaissance in force.

According to tribal tradition Sebetwane himself provoked the first invasion. While still in the neighbourhood of the Kalomo he sent a detachment under Shili, one of his captains, on a raid south of the Zambezi and they returned with cattle taken from the MaTebele. In retaliation Mzilikazi sent an impi north of the river. At a mountain named by the MaKololo Thaba-ya-Basadi, "the women's mountain", a battle raged all day and all night and at dawn the defeated MaTebele fled. It is said that even the Kololo women joined furiously in the fight – hence the name given to the mountain. This marked the beginning of the struggle.

Livingstone reported that at this time Sebetwane thought of going further down the Zambezi to the country of white men, i.e. to the Portuguese settlements. "He had an idea, whence imbibed I never could learn, that if he had a cannon he might live in peace. He had led a life of war, yet no one apparently desired peace more than he did."<sup>4</sup> But there now intervened one of those very interesting persons who so frequently figure in African history, for good or evil – the *senohi*, 'seer' or 'prophet'. This man, Tlapane by name, brought Sebetwane a message from the ancestral

<sup>1</sup> Mhlagazahlansi (Neville Jones), *My Friend Kumalo* (Bulawayo, 1944). This is mainly a transcript of traditions related by the Rev. Mtomphe Kumalo, a member of the Tebele royal house. According to Marshall Hole, Mzilikazi went off with the two regiments Kanda (Guides) and Mnyama (Black Shields); but Kumalo says it was the Mhlope (White Shields) which followed Mzilikazi while the Mnyama-Makanda, whose chief induna was Gundwane Ndiweni, remained and built the town called Gibigxegu (p. 9). "The old ones said that Mzilikazi himself never saw the Zambezi river" (p. 8).

<sup>2</sup> Kumalo corrects the generally accepted belief that the indunas were executed at Intabayezinduna, the flat-topped hill near Bulawayo: "That was where the King lived and people were never executed near important towns" (p. 15).

<sup>3</sup> After Sebetwane's death the MaTebele renewed

attempts to conquer the north. So late as 1888 Bishop Knight Bruce reported rumours that Lobengula was having canoes prepared on the Zambezi near Victoria Falls for the purpose of ferrying over an army. White men then at the king's court were of the opinion that the MaTebele were waiting for an opportunity to move *en masse* across the Zambezi. There were similar reports during and after the war between Lobengula and the South Africa Company; the BaRotse prepared to oppose a crossing of the Zambezi in 1893. C. E. Fripp & V. W. Hiller (ed.) *Gold and the Gospel in Mashonaland* (London, 1949). The MaTebele did actually overrun the Tonga country 1892–93 and were swept away by small-pox. As two of the best regiments were on this expedition, the loss was heavily felt in the subsequent war against the B.S.A. Co.

D. Livingstone, *op. cit.*, p. 87.



spirits. Pointing to the east, he said: "There I behold a fire; shun it; it is a fire that may scorch thee. The gods say, Go not thither!" Then he pointed to the west and told of a nation owning red cattle. Sebetwane's destiny was to rule them. And he added: "When thy warriors have captured the red cattle, let not the owners be killed: they are thy city." So Sebetwane, obedient to what he believed to be divine guidance, led his people through the wooded country traversed by many rivers that lies between the Kafue and the upper Zambezi, a distance of over three hundred miles, as the crow flies. On the way, tradition relates, they encountered an old man who was carrying an enormous ox-horn and who refused either to eat or tell his name. The MaKololo called him Motho-wa-meno, 'the man of teeth'. According to one account this was Muswa, the *ngambela* (prime minister) of the BaRotse, who had been driven from his country during the late civil conflict over the chieftainship. He told of the wealth of his people in cattle, which had horns like the one he carried, and offered his services as guide.

The BaRotse mainly inhabited the great plain, 125 miles long and 25 miles broad, through which the upper Zambezi flows.<sup>1</sup> The dominant factor in their social, economic and political life was then, as it is now, the annual flooding of this expanse; from January to June it is converted into a lake. The inhabitants lead what the pundits call a transhumant existence; that is to say, during the dry season they live on mounds (several acres in extent, thrown up by termites) in the plain itself; then when the waters rise they migrate to the marginal lands rising some hundred feet above the plain.

Molambwa Santulu, tenth in the line of chiefs of this powerful tribe that had established a hegemony over many others, had recently died and two claimants had disputed the succession. One of these, Mobukwano, had been victor in the civil war, but still had to face the opposition of his rival's partisans. A cry now went through the villages: "The MaKololo are coming!" and the

alarm drew the people into a semblance of unity to oppose the invaders.

The MaKololo emerged from the bush-land at the Gap of Kataba near Sefula and there found the BaRotse, under Mokulwakashiku and Katema ready to receive them. The floods had not yet completely subsided. To prevent their retreat in dug-out canoes Sebetwane planned a stratagem to draw the defenders away from the water. The MaKololo burnt their camp and retired with the cattle and women into the bush-land. "Lo! they fly before us", the BaRotse cried in triumph. "Now we shall eat up those weevils!" Having drawn them some distance, the MaKololo faced about, encircled the BaRotse and slew numbers of them. The survivors escaped in their canoes. This victory opened the door into Barotseland.

During the dry season which followed Sebetwane started on his campaign of conquest that in three or four years gave him supremacy over the BaRotse and their subject tribes. In the second year Mobukwano attacked him at the pool of N ea, not far from Ngundu, and was defeated but managed to capture Mamochisane, a daughter of Sebetwane. Many of the BaRotse took refuge in the islands of the Zambezi; others drifted away to the north where one section of the tribe maintained its opposition to Mobukwano and Sebetwane alike. In the third year there was another battle, this time by the Liondo, and again the BaRotse suffered severe defeat; sons of Mobukwano, Sebeso and Sepopa, were among the captives. Remembering the kindly way in which his daughter had been treated by Mobukwano, Sebetwane gave orders that they should have equally generous treatment. They and other men of rank now threw in their lot with him. Indeed, in course of time, the people generally became reconciled to the change of ruler, for he showed himself liberal and just. But though he was by this time master of the country complete tranquility still evaded him. The MaTebele were still a menace, and now another enemy appeared on the scene.

<sup>1</sup> The modern form of the name is BaLozi. For a description of the country and the Lozi manner of life see Max Gluckman, *Economy of the Central Barotse*

*Plain* (Livingstone, 1941) and *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (London, 1951), chapter 1.

Mzilikazi was not the only Zulu chieftain who fled from his native land to escape the fury of the tyrannical Chaka. One of them was named Nxaba (Ngabe) who led a band of refugees northwards through the heart of Mashonaland.<sup>1</sup> Striking the Zambezi at the lowest point of its central bend, they followed it westwards past the Victoria Falls, crossed the Chobe and continued along the main stream as far as the vicinity of Senanga, near the southern end of the great plain. There they crossed to the eastern side. Nxaba showed no disposition to ally himself with the BaRotse against the MaKololo; on the contrary, he raided the local inhabitants even so far as the Lovale country beyond the Kabompo river. Sooner or later he would have to reckon with Sebetwane.

Nxaba recrossed the Zambezi to attack part of the MaKololo that for a time were living on the Kama river. Sebetwane repeated his favourite tactic of a pretended flight. He withdrew along the Lweti river to the salt-pans (*mabala-a-letsuai*). It would take, he was told, twenty days to cross that dreary wilderness, destitute of water and grass. He ordered many cattle to be slaughtered and large bags to be made of the hides and filled with water. Then he led his people onward. Nxaba's army followed precipitately and, before they could realize that they were being led into a trap, found themselves in the midst of the desert, with no water and no food. They had at last to take to chewing their shields and sandals. When they were almost at the last gasp the MaKololo turned on them, and a massacre ensued. Young women and children were spared with a number of youths to be incorporated in Sebetwane's army. Of the rest, only ten men escaped. Nxaba gave himself up to Mobukwano, asking for a refuge on the island of Loyela; there he was treacherously thrown into the river and drowned. The others fell into the hands of Sekute, chief of the BaIleya, who marooned them on an island. They tried to swim to the mainland, but only one named Ndoza escaped.

So Nxaba and his AmaZulu were liquidated;

<sup>1</sup> In the *Ila-speaking Peoples*, I fell into the error of saying that Nxaba (Ngabe) and his people were MaTebele. I am corrected by A. T. Bryant (*op. cit.*, pp. 471 ff.) who tells the story of Nxaba. The chronology is

but the MaTebele, more formidable aggressors, were still afoot. The defeat at Thaba-ya-basadi rankled in Mzilikazi's mind and he repeatedly sent impis to avenge it. In 1843 or 1844, when Sebetwane had become master of southern Barotseland, men of one of these impis were caught in a trap. Sebetwane secretly placed a large flock of goats on an island about two days walk from Sesheke and left canoes lying conspicuous within sight of the invaders' camp. Observing the goats the MaTebele pressed the canoe-men into their service; they slaughtered and ate the goats and then awakened to the fact that they were marooned. The canoes had disappeared; there was no other food on the island; they could not swim. When they weakened with hunger the MaKololo crossed to the island and killed them all.

In retaliation Mzilikazi sent a more considerable force and ordered them to carry canoes with them. By this time Sebetwane was in full control of the upper river and his men had acquired some expertise in the handling of dug-outs. His fleet patrolled the river and effectively prevented the MaTebele from using the canoes which with so much difficulty they had carried across the desert. But the MaTebele made an alliance with Sundano, chief of the MaSubiya who lived north and south of the Zambezi about Sesheke; and the combined forces advanced, the MaTebele by land and the MaSubiya by water, as far as Upa between Senanga and Nalolo. There Sebetwane attacked them. He narrowly escaped being captured by the enemy scouts; the canoe in which he got away was capsized and the occupants were thrown into the river. A man named Masheke Namunda saved Sebetwane, but Lechae – the former husband of Setlutlu, mother of Sekeletu – was drowned.

Presently the MaTebele on the west bank of the Zambezi began to suffer hunger. When they were on the verge of starvation Sebetwane sent them some fat cattle. "Why do you persist in attacking our chief?" the messengers asked. "He has never done you any harm. He thinks you must be uncertain. Since we are not told that Nxaba had to fight his way through the Chobe area, we must suppose that he passed there either before Sebetwane lived at Dinyanti or after he crossed the Zambezi in 1840.



hungry, so sends you this bit of bread." An old man, who had been present on this occasion, told me (perhaps with some exaggeration) that Sebetwane sent fifty oxen, then fifty more, and still more until in all three hundred had been consumed. "We will never attack Sebetwane again", said these MaTebele. Very few of this army lived to make their report to Mzilikazi.

Sebetwane now set out to punish the river people who had aided his enemies. He cleared the islands of the Zambezi or brought their inhabitants under strict control. In particular he swooped down on Sekute, now chief of BaTonga on the island of Kalai near Victoria Falls. Sekute himself succeeded in making a get-away in a canoe by night, but many of his people were slain. (In 1855 Livingstone saw Sekute's grave on Kalai, ornamented with seventy large, mostly decaying, elephant tusks.<sup>1</sup>) No boats were allowed to harbour on the southern bank. As in the Peninsula War Wellington secured his flank by taking possession of all boats on the Tagus, so Sebetwane in this way ensured that he would not again be attacked from the south. The Zambezi was henceforth his first line of defence and to strengthen it he planted villages at strategic points along the northern bank. As Livingstone reported later, "he was aware of the minutest occurrence in the country, for he possessed the gift of gaining the affections of all strangers as well as those of his own people". So it seemed that at last - at long last - Sebetwane had found a home for the Ma-Kololo, a kingdom for himself.

But shadows were creeping over the fair prospect. His original followers were sadly reduced by disease and battle. Now that the fighting was over, some of the incorporated groups began to quarrel among themselves and even to plot against the great chief. Some members of his own family connived with these intrigues. One of these was his nephew Mpephe, who had been so trusted that Sebetwane left him in charge when he was compelled to be absent from his capital, Naliele.

At a *pitso* (tribal assembly) held in 1850 Sebetwane announced his intention of returning to the Chobe. Incredible as it may seem, it is even

said that he thought of retracing his steps to his ancestral home in the far south. His people opposed any such movement: "We are tired of wandering", they said. With some of them, and with his principal councillors, he persisted and when he arrived at Dinyanti he declared: "*Ke bofelelo; ha ke sa tla tlhola ke ea kae?*" This is the end of my wanderings; if I depart hence whither shall I go?" It is said that one reason for taking this step was that he had heard of certain white people who desired to visit him: it would be courteous to spare them many miles of travel.

## 9

The white visitors duly arrived in June 1851. They were David Livingstone with his wife and three children and William Cotton Oswell.

Sechele, chief of the BaKwena, had often talked to Livingstone about Sebetwane, and Livingstone had attempted in 1849 and 1850 to reach him but had been foiled by the opposition of Letsholathebe when he was at Lake Ngami. The sight of that 'glorious river' the Botletle, and of the Thamelakane flowing from the north, 'awakened emotions not to be described'. And there was also the Taoghe descending with great rapidity from the same direction. Surely these two streams had their sources in a high and healthy land! He must go and see! A mission field in 'a well watered country having a passage to the sea on either the east or west coast' - that was what he wanted: 'nothing else will do'. So with his companions Livingstone set out on a trek of eight hundred miles and reached the Chobe on June 18th. There they met one of Sebetwane's chief men who had been sent to keep a look-out for them. Leaving Mrs. Livingstone and the children on the south side of the Chobe Livingstone and Oswell were taken by the chief's paddlers to an island where Sebetwane was awaiting them.

As they stepped out of the canoe at 3 p.m. on the 21st he was there to greet them. He was - Oswell noted - "shy and ill at ease ... surrounded by his tribesmen he stood irresolute and quite overcome in the presence of two ordinary-

<sup>1</sup> D. Livingstone, *op. cit.*, p. 518.

looking Europeans".<sup>1</sup> Livingstone thought him to be about forty-five years of age (he was at least fifty), "of a tall and wiry form, an olive or coffee-and-milk colour, and slightly bald; in manner cool and collected, and more frank in his answers than any other chief I ever met".<sup>2</sup>

Sebetwane accompanied them back to the wagons to be introduced to Mrs. Livingstone and the children. He was particularly pleased that these had come; it was a mark of their confidence in him. Learning that the trek-oxen had been bitten by tsetse and would die, he assured them that he would give them others—as many as they needed. "He treated us right royally", said Oswald.

He listened to Livingstone's exposition of his plans and promised to do all in his power to promote their success. And then came one of the greatest disappointments in Livingstone's experience. On July 6th, Sebetwane, on whom so much depended, suddenly "fell sick" — these are Livingstone's words — "of inflammation of the lungs, which originated in and extended from an old wound, got at Melita". On the 7th, after preaching to the people, Livingstone visited him. He lifted himself up, spoke his greetings, and when they parted said to an attendant: "Take Robert [Livingstone's son] to Maunko [his favourite wife] and get some milk for him." Livingstone saw him no more. That evening he was removed towards Dinyanti and on the way died in the canoe.<sup>3</sup>

Native tradition, as related to me by several old men, supplements Livingstone's account. The travellers, it is said, had a horse named Sikarebe (? Scarab) and Sebetwane expressed a wish to ride it. At first Livingstone refused, saying: "You are not used to horses and this one is rather wild; it might throw you and you would be hurt." But the Chief insisted and Livingstone gave way. The

horse set off at a canter and Sebetwane rode it to the intense and vociferous admiration of his assembled subjects. Coming back he whipped it to a gallop, the multitude burst into a cheer and the horse, making a sudden swerve, threw him. As they picked him up, he said: "My children, it has broken me." Livingstone asked whether they thought him to blame; but they exonerated him saying that Sebetwane was at fault for insisting on riding a horse he had been warned against.<sup>4</sup> We may suppose that the fall reopened old wounds and caused the pneumonia.

Dour Scot that he was, Livingstone rarely gave expression to his emotions; but on this occasion they had free vent in his journal. "Poor Sebetwane! my heart bleeds for thee, and what would I not do for thee now that nothing can be done! . . . I will weep for thee till the day of my death. . . . I will weep for thee, my brother, and I would cast forth my sorrows in despair for thy condition, but I know that thou wilt receive no injustice whither thou art gone. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"<sup>5</sup>

"He was decidedly the best specimen of a native chief I ever met", Livingstone wrote, "I never felt so much grieved by the loss of a black man before."

Marshall Hole is astonished by the force of the affection which the missionary conceived for one whom he calls "this native despot . . . whose record as a marauder is only a degree less black than those of Shaka and Mziligazi". "Any one less likely to captivate a man of Livingstone's principles it is difficult to imagine."<sup>6</sup> He explains it by alleging that Sebetwane, like Sechele, was "astute enough to pretend sympathy with the mission work", such professions being in those days "a sure passport to the favour of the missionaries who

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Oswald, *William Cotton Oswald* (London, 1900), vol I, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> D. Livingstone, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89 f.

<sup>4</sup> Some confirmation of this story is provided by Miss Mackintosh (*A New Zambezi Trail*, London, 1922, pp. 256 f.). During a visit to Barotseland she asked a daughter of Sebetwane — a tall, spare and thoroughbred-looking woman — to tell her the real cause of her father's death. No doubt having in mind what I had written in *The Ila-speaking Peoples*, she wanted to hear about the horse.

The lady glanced perkily at a friend and replied. "He did not fall from the horse, but the missionaries said, 'We should like to see you on horseback', so he mounted and rode, but when he dismounted he was seized with such a horrible panic that he fell ill and died of fright." Miss Mackintosh took this as obviously a late gloss.

<sup>5</sup> W. G. Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone* (London, reprint 1917), p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh Marshall Hole, *The Passing of the Black Kings* (London, 1932), pp. 89 ff.



rejoiced in the hope that they might pluck brands from the burning".

Oswell, who was a soldier, not a missionary, also conceived an immediate admiration of this "mighty fighter with very remarkable force of character". "Beloved of the MaKololo, he was the fastest runner and the best fighter among them; just, though stern, with a wonderful power of attaching men to himself, he was a gentleman in thought and manner."<sup>1</sup>

That Sebetwane, in his long search of a tranquil home for his people, fought and conquered many tribes and that in so doing he acted contrary to Christian principles (not infrequently violated by 'Christian' people) of which he was ignorant this is conceded. But his human qualities merit admiration surely: his courage, his tenacity, his military skill, his personal magnetism, his bonhomie, his frequent clemency. Livingstone and Oswell knew a man when they saw one; and their liking for Sebetwane was something quite apart from a hope of plucking a brand from the fire. He was not a mere despot like Chaka; he was not bloodthirsty like Mzilikazi (in whom also Robert Moffat discerned some humane traits). His wars were not wars of extermination, in any sense of the term; he was able to evoke loyalty and even affection among the conquered. "His praises were sounded far and wide", Livingstone wrote, "He has a heart! He is wise!" were the usual expressions we heard before we saw him." Plutarch somewhere remarks that an expression or a jest may inform us better of men's characters and

inclinations than the most glorious exploits. So *O na le pelo*, 'He has a heart', is Sebetwane's most eloquent epitaph.

## 10

As a tribe the MaKololo did not long outlive the great Chief. His successors - his daughter Mamochisane and his son Sekeletu - were not of his calibre. The latter was a weakling and unpopular; afflicted with leprosy he lived in seclusion. When Livingstone was at Sesheke in August 1860 he found the country "was suffering grievously, and Sebetwane's grand empire was crumbling to pieces". The old MaKololo, he said, had many virtues, but this could hardly be said of their sons.<sup>2</sup> As their numbers decreased, so their morale declined. They were a small and arrogant aristocracy that regarded the subject peoples as slaves. Following Sekeletu's death in August 1863 dissensions arose as to the chieftainship and taking advantage of this the BaRotse rose in revolt. They called from exile the son of their former chief and overthrew Mbololo, son of Sekeletu. A massacre followed. Every Kololo male who failed to escape - and not many did - was slaughtered, while the women and girls were distributed among the victors. One party of fugitives was overtaken ten days south of the Zambezi: the men were mostly killed, the women and children taken captive with the cattle: the rest of the men, weaponless and starving, made their way to Shoshong. They arrived at the end of November 1864. The last of the MaKololo.

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Oswell, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> D. Livingstone, *Expedition to the Zambezi* (London, 1865), p. 283.

# THE ROLE OF HUNTING AND FISHING IN LUVALE SOCIETY

C. M. N. WHITE \*

## SYNOPSIS

*The scope of hunting and fishing in Luvale economy and society is described. Both are branches of a single Luvale concept, but of contrasting importance both in their place in the economy and their status in the field of ritual. In hunting the central point is the specialist hunter whose ritualized position is described. Fishing is outlined in relation to ecology and the annual cycle of the seasons, with details of techniques, rituals associated with it, the nature of fishing rights, and its significance in a modern cash economy. The possible relationship between hunting and social structure involving virilocal marriage in a matrilineal society is considered. It is concluded that no close correlation between the two can be proved; hunting is rather a repository for certain ritual values quite independent of a given social structure.*

TRADITION says that before the coming of chiefs stemming from Ndalamuhitanganyi the Luvale were food gatherers, without any knowledge of agriculture. In their traditional homeland of plains, rivers and seasonal inundations both game and animals and fish are plentiful though game is in places much depleted to-day. Luvale knowledge of fish and fishing is exceptional; Mr. P. I. R. Maclaren, Fisheries Officer in the Game and Tsetse Control Department, who also has experience of African fisheries in Nigeria, informs me that the Luvale fishermen impressed him by a specialized knowledge of the distinctions between species of fish, greatly in advance of any other African fishermen whom he has encountered. To this I can add that they and the allied Lunda, Luchazi and Chokwe are excellent and observant field naturalists with a wide knowledge of birds and animals which embraces their ecology, habits, behaviour, calls and breeding seasons. This they have turned to good account in their diverse techniques for trapping them. Rodents which often

look superficially alike each have their specific vernacular names and a youth barely in his teens will quickly and confidently point out characters to distinguish them and describe differences in their habits and habitats.

Hunting and fishing to the Luvale are branches of a single field of activity embraced by the term *unyanga*, although it is common for translation to associate this term with hunting in contrast to fishing. The latter to-day (and probably in the past) contributes more to the economy and diet of the Luvale than hunting. But fishing is held in less esteem and the Luvale will refer to fishing as *unyanga wauleya* or fool's hunting. In the following pages I shall deal more briefly with hunting and more fully with fishing, because of the actual importance of the latter, but at the same time endeavour to contrast features of the two types of activity which may throw some light upon the different values applied to them by the people themselves.

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## A. HUNTING

THE GREAT PLAINS which form a feature of the Luvale homeland are the haunt of numbers of wildebeest (*Gorgon taurinus*). Locally common also are reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*), red lechwe (*Onotragus lechwe*), roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) and tsessebe (*Damaliscus lunatus*), but the Luvale have always eaten a variety of smaller mammals and birds as well, and evidently never found it practicable to obtain an adequate supply of animal protein from the larger game animals alone. Hence hunting may be carried out with small fibre snares, larger noose snares for larger animals, spears, bows and arrows, muzzle loading guns and game drives. Moreover women are not debarred from contributing to the supply of animal protein by their efforts, and they dig up nests of gerbils (*Tatera* spp.) on the plains. There is reason to believe that the sporadic outbreaks of bubonic plague at Balovale may be connected with this practice since these gerbils are a known reservoir of plague-carrying fleas.

But the mere catching of animals is not in itself of special significance in society. This however is otherwise with the professional hunter who has been initiated into the circle of expert hunters. Hence if a man has had some success with bow or gun in killing larger game animals, he feels the need to seek admission to this circle. This desire for initiation springs from the fear that his success will be short-lived because the professional hunters will be jealous of his success and bring to bear supernatural powers to thwart him. Moreover it is believed that a hunter, unless he is initiated, is exposed to special dangers; human familiars of sorcerers will be especially interested in anyone who has frequent supplies of meat, and the hunter himself may fall a victim to them unless he is ritually protected. He therefore takes his bow or gun and goes to a professional hunter, leaning his gun against the shrine (*chishinga*) of the latter on arrival. The professional hunter understands the sign and takes appropriate action. First he prepares charms for the novice including special medicine in which he must wash, and magical preparation in skin bundles which will enable

him to be invisible to game or will protect him from danger such as lions or familiars of sorcerers when he is out hunting. He then warns his wife that she must beware of sexual relations with other men whilst he takes the novice out hunting. It is noteworthy that these are very stringent. Not only must she have no relations with any lover, but she must keep away from other people and never greet anyone by a handclasp, lest these situations lead on to other consequences.

The hunter and the novice at this stage are symbolized as mother and child (*mama yanyanga* and *mwana wanyanga* respectively). The first action is for the hunter to make a kill, and then place the novice seated on the neck of the dead beast and mark him with its blood. This may be repeated several times after which the novice shoots a beast to show what he has learned and the trainer shoots several more. On their return to the village the hunter cooks for him the special portions (*makonda*) which are the prerogative of a learner hunter. These consist of the ears, heart and lungs.

The process of going out to hunt together may be continued for a whole year before the hunter decides that his pupil is ready to dedicate a shrine of his own. When this time is reached the trainer summons other professional hunters and a dance is held. The next morning they go and cut a pole for the shrine. Only the trees known as *mutete*, *musole*, *musese* or *mupepe* may be used. In the evening this pole is set up close to the hut of the novice; at the same time a small hut (*katunda*) is built in which the hunter's charms are kept, and which his wife must not approach or see.

In another form of the charms known as *ndepe* however the wife of the hunter is the only person who may see the horn of medicine which is kept in the *katunda*. It is she who takes a little of the medicine from the horn container and daubs it on her husband before he goes out to hunt. In this form of the special observances of the hunter we have the contrast to the previous one since a woman plays an essential part in it.

In a further form of charms to ensure success

the trainer prepares a carved human figure for the learner. This is kept in the *katunda* and can be animated with human blood and will then go out with its owner and round up wild animals like cattle for the hunter to kill. This is known as *unyanga wakapangula*. It can only occur if the teacher is himself a sorcerer and therefore able to hand on the art to his pupil. The villagers where he lives may suspect a hunter of having such a familiar spirit if he brings in meat lacking fat or blood, because he has had to feed his familiar. Or again if many children die in the village, the hunter may be thought to have a familiar which is feeding on human beings because of a lack of game. Such suspicions will not in any case arise where a hunter's wife is seen entering the *katunda* as described above under *ndeke*; there is therefore no automatic association of hunters as a class with sorcery of familiars.

Once the rites of initiation are completed the teacher receives his pay from the pupil for services rendered. The newly qualified professional hunter takes himself a praise-name to boast of his prowess; *Kachongo luhonda-mbinga* (*Kachongo*, the twister of horns) or *Sakawaya musoji keshi mavanda* (*Sakawaya* who provides meat soup, not fish scales) are typical examples.

A professional hunter must observe various taboos to preserve his prowess, but still more important those at his village who depend upon him for meat must likewise follow certain observances with meat killed by him. They must never cut it with a hoe, only with an axe or knife; they must not mix it with other meat in the same pot and they must never hang it up under the roof poles inside a house. Any member of the village found doing such a thing would be considered to have endangered the hunter's powers and hence be liable to pay him compensation. A professional hunter is also closely linked to manifestations of displeased ancestral spirits. He himself must take care to make offerings to any ancestor who was himself a professional hunter and so ensure the ancestor's aid in his hunting. In addition deceased professional hunters are especially prone to manifest themselves in troublesome ways to their living kin as *mahamba* whether the kin are hunters

or not.<sup>1</sup> Of these the most common are those known in Luvalé as *tambwe* or *muta kalombo*, *chitakai* and *chitapakasa*. Living hunters play a prominent part in the exorcism rites of such *mahamba*. The special status of a professional hunter is also emphasized in his burial rites. Whereas the Luvalé in the past merely placed corpses in the bush without any grave, a hunter must be buried by other hunters in a grave dug at a place where an animal hoof print shows that an animal has passed, and rocks or lumps of grey anthill earth are heaped on the grave.

The circumstances surrounding the status of a professional hunter in the community are similar to those which are found with certain other specialists such as diviners and blacksmiths. Superficially the professional hunter appears to be a very important component in any community; yet it is clear that his actual contribution to the supply of animal protein is in no way overwhelmingly important. Fish has always been more important to the Luvalé as an assured source of protein than meat, and anyone may catch and provide meat without being a specialist hunter. Nevertheless the importance of the status is stressed not only by the ritual attending it and observances to be followed by the whole community in respect of how his meat is treated, but also by the special precautions against social amnesia where hunters are concerned which take the form of the frequent appearance of hunters as *mahamba* spirits. It must also be borne in mind that the Luvalé are in no sense to-day a people dependent on food-gathering for existence. They have for many years been an agricultural people in which food gathering has been limited to the provision of animal protein for a mixed diet. Moreover, for at least a century they have had guns and gunpowder so that the hunting of game animals has during that period been considerably easier than when it depended upon a bow and arrows. But the special status of a hunter institutionalized in the way described above goes back much further into the past, and has managed to survive as a relic of a time when the Luvalé or their forebears

<sup>1</sup> For a general description of the *mahamba* manifestations cf. White, *Africa*, XIX, 1949, pp. 324-331.



were presumably collectors, sometime before the coming of Ndalamuhitanganyi. Perhaps here once again the Luvale addiction to ritual has enabled this status to survive although it has long ceased to be functionally important.

There is perhaps another reason why the status of the professional hunter was preserved long after hunting had ceased to be of prime importance in providing a food supply. Of all the various types of relish eaten with porridge (*shima*), game meat is perhaps more highly prized than any other, just as *shima yaukatu* or porridge without relish represents the lowest level of diet. Snares of various types depend upon an animal finding its way into them, and though skill in setting a snare is also important it is no guarantee that meat will be forthcoming. Game drives are seasonal; they depend upon long grass dry enough to fire for the Luvale type of *likazo*. Hence they are only operable for part of the year. But the professional hunter is in a different category; for he can go out at any time and obtain meat. Some period are of course better than others. If the grass is excessively long, game can escape notice more easily; if the grass has all been burned off game may be

difficult to approach, hence the emphasis on charms which will make a professional hunter invisible.

There is unfortunately little in the literature to indicate that previous accounts of other tribes have drawn a sharp line between hunting as a general part of economic organization and as a specially ritualized occupation of a few adepts, though references are found to specialist hunters of dangerous game such as elephants.<sup>1</sup> The Ovimbundu and Lamba have specialist initiated hunters however.<sup>2</sup> Richards remarks: "Hunting in former times seems to have been associated with political authority or prestige." This tempts one to seek for a connection between the function of the hunter in Luvale society and the coming of chiefs from Mwachiamvwa, especially as the motif of hunters acquiring political power occurs in several traditions of the south western Congo Basin and adjacent areas. But if hunting played a prominent practical role in Luvale economy in the past, it must have been before the coming of chiefs, at a time when the Luvale were an acephalous people, and traditionally lacking agricultural activities.

## B. FISHING

THE LUVALE constantly emphasize their fishing activities in contrast to the relative lack of such activities among the Lunda, Luchazi and Chokwe. The Lunda indeed are remarkably deficient in detailed terminology for different species of fish and will fall back on the blanket title of *anshi atooka* (white fish) when at a loss for a specific name. This lack of knowledge on their part is largely determined by different environmental conditions for the Lunda live predominantly in country watered by small swift streams often near the top of the watershed, as in Mwinilunga district. In such areas fish are not abundant and there is a

great lack of suitable breeding places for them. But even within these limited resources it must be observed that the Lunda have not made great efforts to catch what fish they have. The small lake Chibesha at Mwinilunga contains excellent fish but until recently local taboos caused it to be left strictly unfished.

In the following account I have tried to give a fairly full outline of Luvale fishing for little has been put on record about it.<sup>3</sup> I have also taken the opportunity to make some comparisons with the data for the Unga of Lake Bwangweulu as described by V. W. Brelsford.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Junod: *The Life of a South African Tribe*, II, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dove: *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia*, and Hambley: *The Ovimbundu of Angola*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Southern Lunda and Related Peoples*, Ethnographic Survey, 1951, pp. 55 and 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamps*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 12, 1946.

### *The ecological background*

The main Luvale area in Balovale district lies west of the Zambezi; it consists of large open plains intersected by belts of *Erythrophloeum* and *Burkea* woodland with palms; in the north west it rises to the watershed plain known as *Minyanya* and is broken in a north south line by several drainage depressions which form flood plains for the rivers, especially the Litapi and the Kashiji. The latter dry up extensively during the dry season. The only major perennial rivers are the Zambezi and Lungwevungu which form the eastern and southern boundaries of this area.

Rainfall occurs from mid-October to early April; the average precipitation during this period is about 45 inches. During this time the sandy plains absorb moisture which drains into the flood plains, aided by the run-off from the watershed plain in the north. The flood reaches its height in January and February and thereafter falls steadily until the end of the dry season by when the flood plains and their lesser arms have dried up, leaving pools, some of considerable size such as Mwange "lake" on the Litapi.

Luvale fishing activities form an annual cycle correlated with this environmental background, and except at the height of the flood fish are caught throughout the year, the techniques being suitably adjusted to the changing conditions.

### *The main annual fishing cycle*

The Luvale regard their fishing cycle as beginning at the end of the year after the rain has started but before the water table has risen high enough to start filling the drainage depressions. About the end of November or early December preparations are made for the spawning run of the mud barbel (*Clarias* sp.); this run is known as *musuza*. A small affluent of a larger stream is chosen. A fence of reeds is built across it, leaving a passage in the middle; from the latter on the upstream side a circular fence is constructed into which the fish pass and from which they cannot escape. The main fence is called *jingando* and the circular enclosure *malela*. As the water rises the frogs on the plains begin to call, and when the

stream fills the mud barbel come from down stream to spawn in the flooded drainage depressions. One morning the *malela* is found full of fish, and the men enter and kill the fish with spears and axes. The mud barbel have large flat skulls and must not be killed with clubs, lest, it is said, the others hear the noise and turn back.

The mud barbel killed thus are buried in a hole in the water at the bank for twenty four hours before splitting and drying; if this is not done, it is considered that when dry the flesh breaks up easily when they are handled or made up into bundles. The spawning run of the mud barbel lasts only a few days and is followed by about two months when fishing is at its lowest ebb, as the flood rises. January and February are the two months when fish are extremely scarce and fishing at a virtual standstill.

The second major stage occurs when the flood begin to fall; fish weirs are then built across seepage streams on plains feeding into larger streams. These weirs are called *makalila* and consist of a barrage of sods of grass to block the flow; holes are left in them and on the downstream side pocket-shaped traps of matting called *vikanga* are placed, into which the fish from upstream fall as they descend with the receding flood. Fishing in *makalila* goes on in March and April. By May these seepage streams have become dry, and it is necessary to repeat the process on the larger streams.

The dam built there in a suitable shallow place is a much stronger structure of poles firmly braced and finally blocked with branches and sods. It is called *walilo*. Cylindrical basket traps are placed on the downstream side; the largest of these *likaza* or *ngombe namwana* is big enough to catch a crocodile which swims into it, and is made of withies and sticks. Smaller but similar traps are *muwutwa* made of reeds or sticks, and *likanda* made of grass or small reeds. The *walilo* is too large a structure to enable one man to build it; a number participate, each placing his individual traps at it. Fishing at these large dams lasts from May to July and during this period great numbers of people camp along the rivers and streams in temporary camps.



By August the flood has fallen so far that these weirs and dams are no longer productive; numerous pools remain, large and small. A man and his wife will fish the small pools by bailing out the water with baskets; this is called *kusuhwa*. The larger pools cannot be bailed and these are treated with fish poison, parties of men and women combining for the purpose. Further reference to this made below under Ritual. Fish poisoning takes place most commonly in September and October. The drying pools attract numerous pelicans, cormorants, herons and marabout storks, and at this time it is a race between man and the birds as to who will get the fish first. Fish poison is apparently most effective on *Tilapia* (so-called "bream"), and less so on the mud barbel. These last which are found at this time in the larger pools are killed by spearing, known as *kuwaya*. Concurrently with this, men and women may combine with conical hand traps in shallow pools, placing the trap over fish which are located. This trap is called *chongo*, and fishing thus is *kutavika*.

By November these activities have ended and the time has again come to prepare for the spawning run of the mud barbel.

Brelsford (l.c. pp 61-62) refers to the belief that fish only move freely at Bangweulu on moonless nights, and adds that the weirs are not visited when the nights are bright. This is quite different from the Luvala area. Here the fish seem to move freely by daylight or on bright nights and there is no indication that the weir fishing is only worth while on dark nights. The spawning run of the mud barbel seems to take place at night so that the trap is found full early in the morning, but here too there is no belief or evidence that moonless nights are required. More biological data about the fish and their habits is needed before any comment on this discrepancy can be made.

#### *Subsidiary methods of fishing*

In addition to the main annual cycle of weir fishing and the other methods just described, certain additional methods of fishing are carried on. These may be listed under techniques as:

(a) *Hook and line fishing*: This is known as

*kulowa* if the fisherman is fishing himself; *kuta ulovo* or *linata* if a line is left and set. Baited lines may be of a single large hook or a line with a number of hooks at intervals. Such lines are known as *linata* or *liyumbila*. In pools and lagoons the line is often tied to a bundle of reeds which is left to float freely in the water. Large mud barbel, Tiger fish (*Hydrocyon* sp.) and "Pike" (*Sarcodaces* sp.) are commonly taken thus, but "bream" are not normally taken on hooks. A variant of this but without actual hooks is *kanyangapelu*: here the fisherman has a bunch of cords baited with worms and trails them or dangles them from a canoe. Mud barbel and *musuta* (*Crenopoma* sp.) take the bait and are hauled out of the water.

(b) *Traps set in suitable places*: *Lunguwa* is a rough bark rope cone basket without a valve; it is used between December and February; near the bank of a small stream a fence is constructed to guide the fish and in the centre is a space where the *lunguwa* is set with its closed end facing into mid stream. It is baited with cassava peelings or pounded cassava leaves. Fish are caught thus one at a time. It is very effective for "bream" (*Tilapia*).

*Lizakasa* is a stronger version constructed of fibrous roots and with a valve (*chilazo*) at the mouth to prevent fish emerging after they have entered. It is about three feet long but with a wide mouth and is baited and thrown into a river in a place with deep water, secured to the bank and left for a day or two. Many fish may be caught simultaneously.

*Makinda* are long rush traps which may run up to ten feet in length; they are only a few inches wide at the closed end but rather wider at the mouth; men or women make them, and place them on a *walilo* to catch the very small fish which might otherwise escape but they are also sometimes set by themselves in grassy inundations or in shallow or by a ford on a large river, and may be regarded as secondary to the main types of weir fishing.

(c) *Net fishing*: Net fishing is important because it can be practised almost throughout the year; its scope is however limited because it requires considerable expanses of water either as large rivers or lakes. It follows that in some such

suitable places net fishing for environmental reasons may be locally more important than the main annual cycle described above. Nets were formerly made from bark fibres but now the cords from discarded motor tyres are widely used. I am not aware that any Luvale have started to make nylon nets such as are in wide use at lake Mweru and the Luapula, but net fishing is hardly so important in the Luvale scheme of fishing. Methods of net fishing are :

*Kulika* (set net and leave for the night).

*Kukuvulwila* (driving into net by making noise with a paddle). By this technique one man in a boat selects a place where there are obviously plenty of fish; he then sets his net and by beating his paddle in the water drives the fish into the net.

*Kufuta* (seine-netting). This requires two canoes to draw the net. A special type of net is used in deep open waters; it has very large mesh and is known as *likokela*. The general term for a net is *lyoji*; a small type of gill net often used for setting at night is called *kalenge*.

(d) *Drag baskets*: These are used only by women; the basket is known as *liyanga* and the method of fishing as *kuswina*. Women fish thus dragging their baskets through the water which may be waist deep. The normal method is for a party of women to fish together; each woman with a drag basket has a helper known as *swavi*. The women with the baskets form a continuous line with their baskets touching end to end; the helpers then enter the water and by the disturbance they make, drive the fish into the drag baskets. Casualties from crocodiles are by no means unknown among women fishing thus; the women with the baskets rather than their helpers seem to be the victims most often, as a crocodile comes from behind and seizes one by the leg as she bends over basket facing the helpers.

(e) *Night fishing by flares*: This is called *kumunyika*; it is done from a canoe on larger rivers, the canoe having a flare in the stern; as the fish rise to the flame, they are speared. It is done between June and October and only on a moonless night. Certain "bream" are caught thus.

It is noteworthy that fishing is not only a male occupation; women alone use the drag baskets; men and women combine in bailing pools, in *kutavika* with *vyongo* traps and in using *makinda* traps; small girls may be seen fishing with a hand line or with *kanyangapelu*.

### *Magic and ritual association with fishing*

(a) *Fish poisoning*: The most important of the special observances are those connected with fish poisoning. Brelsford (l.c. pp. 67-68) refers to the use of fish poison at Bangweulu but does not indicate that there is any ritual about it.

Among the Luvale sexual intercourse is forbidden between the participants on a fish poisoning expedition; this is significant because men and women actually participate together in fish poisoning so that the taboo must be observed throughout the period of the expedition. At night the men and women sleep in separate shelters to ensure that no one breaks the taboo. After going to the scene of the fish poisoning the following morning, the senior member of the party strikes a blow with a hoe at the fish poison plant, and thereupon the rest of the party lie down on their backs and writhe as a symbol of the dying and wriggling fish when the poison has been put in the water. After this the party dig up the bulbs and return to their camp. On lifting the baskets of bulbs, each man must lift his own basket without help; otherwise the fish may recover from the poison. The ban on sexual relations is so strict that the party coming back to their camp with the bulbs must likewise not pass through a village lest they are contaminated by the presence of those living there who have had intercourse. No one who has had intercourse during the night may come to the camp of the fish poisoners. The next stage is to summon someone who is regarded as skilled and lucky in his casting of fish poison. He has no special title but is referred to as "one with a bitter arm". For want of a better term, I refer to him here as the "specialist". Men and women now pound the bulbs, on the ground and not in wooden mortar. The pounded cake is placed in a grass basket; now no one may eat or drink until further notice. The "specialist" enters the pool, dragging the grass



basket of poison up and down calling on the fish to come. When the contents of one grass basket have been dissolved, he takes a new basket. Suddenly the first fish to be affected appears; this is called *tangu*. The "specialist" quickly recovers it and hands it to his companions who roast it for him. The "specialist" eats this fish and casts its bones back into the water. Now the rest of the party may eat and drink. Many fish now begin to rise to the surface; no one may point to them with his finger, only with his fist, lest the catch is spoilt. If they have finished collecting all the fish and do not intend going on to poison another pool, sexual relations may be resumed.

Fish-poisoning is referred to as *kusukila*; the fish poison is called *usungu*. But this is a generic term and several different plants are used. *Tephrosia* sp. is grown in villages and known in Luvale as *kahulula* but often simply called *usungu*; the leaves of this are pounded up as poison. The commonest wild species with the bulb which is pounded up and referred to in the above account is known as *chikala*. It may be transplanted to a village. The botanical name has not been ascertained. A third and very potent species whose roots are pounded up is known as *mbondo*. (Botanical name not known.) A further species, *kaveya*, has a milky latex and the whole plant and roots are pounded up. This is known to the Luchazi as *vinyota*. Other plants used are *mutandakembe* (in Luchazi *ntandakembe*), and *munyakajila* (in Luchazi *muntsato*). None of these names appears in the considerable collection of vernacular names collected by the Forestry Department of Northern Rhodesia, which serves as an invaluable source of botanical identifications. As fish poisoning is illegal, although still indulged in, no doubt there has been reluctance to reveal the names of the plants used. The above details should enable botanical determinations to be made in due course.

(b) *Fish weirs*: In the past the Luvale abstained from intercourse whilst working at a *walilo* weir; to-day this taboo is often observed only whilst the weir is being built, but thereafter charms may be put upon it and intercourse resumed. Individual variation in the strictness of this taboo is to be found; the Luchazi who have a

similar taboo only resume intercourse after the weir has already yielded many fish. They also wash with a decoction of *mupepe*,<sup>1</sup> *mukula*<sup>2</sup> - *munyumbe*<sup>3</sup> if they have an emission during a dream, before intercourse has been resumed. This agrees with Brelsford's data for the Unga.

(c) *Magical charms to ensure good fishing*: These are in widespread use and take many different forms; one or two illustrations will suffice to indicate the use of such charms. Charm for woman's drag basket: the woman cooks a few fish, calls some small children to eat them and covers the children with her drag basket whilst they eat. They must keep completely silent whilst eating. Next morning she digs a hole in the path near the village and places in it the fish bones left by the children. She adds some wood from a tree struck by lightning, some twigs of *mutete*<sup>4</sup> or *mupepe* and a preparation called *tambikila* (feathers or bones of a bird of uncertain identification). On this she lights a fire and places her drag basket over it. The smoke from this fire is regarded as a guarantee of a good catch. Charm for a net: the fisherman obtains the bones for the recipe by going out with his net and catching a fish which he brings home; this is cooked and eaten by him and his family. The bones are collected and the process described above is then followed and the net smoked over the fire. Charms containing wood from a tree struck by lightning, *tambikila* and tied with fibres of *pundukaina* (*Grewia flavescens*) are also fastened to the weighted side of the net. Brelsford's medicines for netting (l.c., p. 142) at Bangweulu should be compared with these for certain echoes of similar practices are found there though the details are quite different.

(d) *Invocation of ancestral spirits to aid fishing*: A fisherman at his village may come with his fish spear and a fish and leave them at his *muyombo* stick as a mark of respect to his *mukulu* (guardian ancestral spirit). His wife soon comes and takes away the fish to cook but the spear is left thus all night.

At a fishing camp a man will set up a *muyombo*

<sup>1</sup> *Hymenocardia mollis*.

<sup>2</sup> *Pterocarpus angolensis*.

<sup>3</sup> *Isoblerima paniculata*.

<sup>4</sup> *Amblygonocarpus obtusangulus*.

stick to his guardian spirit'. From time to time he puts a few fish there and asks his spirit to ensure good fishing. A man afflicted by a troublesome *li-hamba* spirit, makes a little mound of earth near his shelter at the fishing camp and makes offerings of meal to it before fishing; later he will put a few fish there to ensure that the *lihamba* does not adversely affect his fishing. The practice of either ritual or magic in connection with fishing in Luvale camps is not conspicuous; women frequent the fishing camps freely though they must not actually go to the *walilo* and the casual visitor might not even think of looking for charms. This is in marked contrast with the Unga of Bangweulu as described by Brelsford. On the other hand it is noteworthy that the ritual concerned with fish poisoning which is strictly observed by the Luvale, seems to have no counterpart among the Unga. There are no Luvale fishing priests such as are found at Bangweulu.

#### *Nature of fishing rights*

Rights in weirs and in pools suitable for poisoning are owned by individuals. These rights are acquired in the first instance simply by finding a suitable site and setting up a weir or finding a suitable pool and fishing it with poison. The Luvale political system lacks centralization and it was never considered that the fish were specifically owned by a territorial chief to whom a request must be made before a man could obtain fishing rights for a weir or pool to poison. Once a man had obtained such rights by prescription, they vested in him and his heirs and no stranger could infringe them. It is however common for persons who own such rights to give permission to a stranger to fish his pools upon a suitable return. Since a weir requires a number of men to build it, the owner of the weir invites others to participate.

There are no specific rights over areas of net fishing and any one may come and fish in a suitable place without interference. A site for the spawning run of the mud barbel is owned in the same way as a weir site by prescription; sites for the small weirs known as *makalila* are not owned as they are regarded as too ephemeral. Pools for spearing or fishing by *chongo* traps are owned. The various

subsidiary types of fishing listed in the previous paragraphs may be indulged in anywhere. Drag basket fishing by women does not as such involve the ownership of any rights but the pools in which it is done are almost certain to be the property of some individual for reasons of other types of fishing there.

This division between weirs which are owned and netting grounds which are open to the public is similar to the position reported by Brelsford (l.c., Chapter 5.) for the Unga of Bangweulu, though he gives no data about pools for poisoning, spearing etc. in this connection.

The rights to tribute enjoyed by Luvale chiefs are confined to those places where the fishing place has an actual owner, that is to say the owner of a *walilo* weir, a barbel spawning run place, or a pool for spearing or fishing by *vyongo* or poison was under a traditional obligation to take an annual tribute of fish to the chief. But persons fishing in netting places or other free places without any individual rights of ownership did not take tribute to the chief from their catches. This position appears to continue to-day.

From Brelsford's account it would appear that Unga chiefs had considerably wider claims to tributes of fish from those fishing in their areas; whether this was so before European administration is not clear since in areas lacking a strong political organization the recognition of chiefs under the Native Authorities Ordinances has often greatly enhanced the standing of so-called chiefs who had previously enjoyed much less status. Comparing the position as between Luvale and Unga where fishing rights are concerned, the types of rights vested in individuals appear to be very similar in both areas, but the type of rights to tribute from fishing considerably different. Since in the Luvale area, a fisherman not under an obligation to give tribute from e.g. a netting area, might nevertheless after a good catch give a chief a present of fish on account of his politeness towards the chief, it is not impossible that in Unga areas this situation was converted into a wider range of obligatory tribute once the Unga chiefs found that their position had the support of the British Administration.



### *The attitude of the Luvale towards fish*

As noted above the Luvale have a wide range of names for different kinds of fish; over fifty names are in common general use. It is not, however, known how many different kinds of fish actually live in the area. Brelsford reports 67 different species for the Bangweulu area. Maclaren's short survey indicates about fifty and is likely to be a fair preliminary approximation.

The Unga are said to have no strong preference as between fresh and dry fish; among the Luvale there is an overwhelming preference for fresh fish. As far as I know the only fish not eaten by any Luvale is an eel-like species called *musokongo*. However many other people may have taboos affecting certain fish. A woman who has not yet had her first menstruation or who is pregnant may not eat *musuta*; in the first instance lest she has a blocked vagina, in the second lest her child be an epileptic. *Pungu* (Tiger fish) and *kundu* (a *Tilapia*) are also taboo to a pregnant woman. The novices at the circumcision rites are also forbidden to eat these same two fishes until their scars have healed. A leper is forbidden to eat both these fish and also *chingwele* (*Synodontis* sp.). Whilst no single fish is more highly rated by the Luvale than any other, there is no doubt that each individual has his own preference. In the Mweru-Bangweulu region it is commonly said that Africans prefer the oily *Bagridae* and their allies such as *Synodontis* and *Auchenoglanis*, and rate the more delicate *Cichlidae* less highly. There is no evidence to substantiate this for the Luvale.

Maclaren analysed some catches at Balovale. In one sample caught at a barrier across the mouth of a swamp depression 39 per cent were cichlids (bream), 30 per cent mormyrids, and 15 per cent cyprinids (minnows, etc). *Synodontis* and *Clarias* (Squeakers and mud barbel) only amounted to 11 per cent.

Until recently, African fishing, like African agriculture, was for subsistence only and there was no great surplus of fish until the industrialization of the Copperbelt provided a concentration of African population short of fish and willing to pay high prices for it. In considering the nature of

Luvale weir fishing or the fishing of the barbel spawning run, this must be born in mind. As long as these fishing methods were merely to provide a man and his family with fish the amount caught was very small. But with the modern commercialization of the fish the picture is very different.

Nevertheless it is unwise to assume that overfishing in general is taking place. Maclaren considered after a visit that the areas of swampy inundation are so great that only a fraction of them is being exploited by fishing. He also pointed out that at least half the fish caught at barriers are species which never grow big, and that experience from fish farming shows that the production of fry in many species is excessive and vigorous thinning out may be beneficial. On the other hand I know from personal experience that in 1938 the Lunsongwe, a flood plain stream, was teeming with fish; soon after population came in to settle there in some numbers; weir fishing started and ten years later the Lunsongwe was almost devoid of fish. Any extensive change in this respect will not be popular for the Luvale have an intense urge for money and any interference by controlling the weirs or spawning run will appear as a threat to their economic position. However, it appears that at present the only measures of conservation necessary are a limitation of fishing to requirements for personal consumption during January and February when fish are breeding, and a prohibition of the use of fish poisons.

### *The economic significance of fishing*

The Luvale fisheries do not of course compare with the much larger fisheries of Lakes Mweru and Bangweulu. Nevertheless they are far from being insignificant in the modern cash economy, and in particular enable the African traders who act as middlemen to be quite well-off. I give some statistics for several years. The *African Affairs Report, Northern Rhodesia*, 1951, shows the following:

Price paid to fishermen at waterside	£10 per ton.
Transport costs waterside to Chingola	£23 per ton.
Sale price on Copperbelt	£100 per ton.

It was estimated that 200 tons of fish were exported, and thus the fish traders realized £20,000, from which they would have to deduct £2,000 paid to the fishermen producers and £4,600 for transport. At this time the Luvale Native Authority levied a fish trading licence which brought their Treasury £355. In 1952 the same report estimated the Copperbelt value of the trade at over £100,000.

In 1953 the price to the fishermen producer was raised to 2*d.* per pound, and 180 tons was exported. In that year Mr. Maclaren made a survey of the fisheries and gave some valuable figures of the economics. He worked on a water-side price to the producer of 2*d.* per lb. and a Copperbelt average sale price of 2*s.* 4*d.* per lb. This gave the middleman a nett profit of £225 per cent. In round figures this meant that the fisherman got £16. 6*s.* 0*d.* per ton or £3,000 for the year. The Copperbelt value was £233 per ton or £42,000 for the total value of the trade to

consumers. I think that the 1952 estimate of the value of the trade as in excess of £100,000 was too optimistic, although figures are in any case only approximate, and at periods of shortage it is well known that Copperbelt prices may soar. Later in 1953 plans were made to reorganize the industry. The Native Authority made it compulsory for fish to be marketed through organized markets and sold by weight at 4*d.* per lb., of which 3*d.* went to the fisherman and 1*d.* as a cess to the Native Treasury. This reorganization went off without any difficulties and now gives the producer a better share in the value of the industry. Unfortunately no very reliable figures of the number of middlemen benefitting are available. In 1952 when the fish trading licence for middlemen as still in force, it was paid by 622 persons but many of these were not full-time traders, and merely taking a few bundles to sell to get easy money.

#### C. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING AND FISHING

THE FOREGOING ACCOUNT will serve to show how much more systematic was the exploitation of fishing than hunting even before the fisheries were drawn into the present day cash economy. It will also be noted that there is no ritualized great fisherman comparable with the specialist hunter. Ritual is not absent from fishing but plays a less prominent part in it than in hunting, and only fish poisoning can be said to have important ritual observances associated with it. I believe that fish poisoning represents a primitive element in the various techniques of fishing, since it involves no techniques requiring the use of apparatus. This would seem to support the suggestion that both in hunting and in fishing the elements involving special ritual may be relics from the past. In my recent study of Luvale social organization<sup>1</sup> I made brief mention, in a postscript, of Dr. Turner's paper<sup>2</sup> in which he associates virilocal marriage among the Mwinilunga Ndembu with hunting. He says: "The high value set on hunting out of

the total constellation of economic activities; the fact that hunting was carried out most commonly by a small band of males; the co-residence of the male hunters; the association of virilocal marriage with this condition"; are structural characteristics of Ndembu society. Now I have shown that Luvale social structure partakes of similar virilocal marriage, but that hunting is of small practical significance in comparison with fishing in Luvale economy. Although Dr. Turner does not refer to the association of ritualized professional hunters, which exists among the Ndembu just as among the Luvale, it is only in the existence of this status that hunting can be said to have a special value in these societies. But the professional hunter with very similar ritual apprenticeship and subsequent observances exists among the Lamba, as well described by Doke. Yet the Lamba are not a people following virilocal marriage in the manner of the Ndembu and Luvale. Moreover the specialist hunter is a solitary hunter, not the leader of a band of hunters. He is protected by magical means against the dangers attendant upon long

<sup>1</sup> *African Studies*, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> *Africa*, xxv, 1955.



solitary sojourns in the bush, and is the stereotype that so often recurs in folk tales, of the type found throughout these tribes. In these, a man comes upon a mysterious lone hunter at his shelter surrounded by meat, and far from people.

This archetypal hunter, particularly well characterized in the *Liyambi lyangongo* (great hunter of the wilderness) of Luchazi folk tales is the antithesis of co-operation between a group of related males all co-operating in hunting. The professional hunter inducted by ritual into the association of hunters is the actual realization in society of this mythical great hunter. I do not question that combined hunting activities do take place as for instance in game drives, although collective operations of this sort are much better illustrated by Luvale fishing than by hunting. Yet as we have seen fishing is in any case "fool's hunting" as the Luvale say, and is not given a special status comparable with that of the lone specialist hunter.

In all these tribes a strong element of collecting of feral protein can be traced, although it is rapidly giving place to other and domestic or commercial sources of supply to-day. With the Lunda, small animals, birds and honey seem to have been the dominant features of collecting; with the Luvale animals and fish; with the Luchazi animals and grasshoppers.<sup>1</sup> I would therefore suggest that Turner's hypothesis of the virilocal element in social structure might be tested not so much against the presence of a high value set upon hunting as against collecting of protein. But here it seems certain that adequate information would

show equal importance for protein collecting in the past in uxori-local societies. Alternatively the special status of the great hunter is a survival and not necessarily to be associated with modern social structure. Dr. Turner in his work on Ndembu social structure takes matrilineal descent for granted in that he seeks no explanation for it as a phenomenon, but virilocal marriage as an element in the structure of society which needs explanation in terms of a society of hunters. My own feeling is that at present both have to be taken as given elements in these societies, and that whilst social structure reflects the existence of both these principles, one is no more susceptible of immediate explanation than the other. Richards has reviewed variations in the patterns of residence associated with matrilineal descent.<sup>2</sup> She points out that virilocal marriage in a matrilineal society is found among the Mayombe and Kongo; the similar structure in this respect among the Luvale, Ndembu and others serves to provide one more feature which associates these tribes with a culture complex extending from the lower Congo to north-western Northern Rhodesia, in contrast to the rather different societies further south and east. If this is so, it is preferable to regard hunting not as a factor underlying social organization, but as a practice which has survived because it preserves certain ritual values. This is likewise illustrated by M. Douglas for the Lele in her essay in *African Worlds* (pp. 1-26) where the basis for ritual is a communal hunt and not the isolated specialist hunter of the Luvale and Ndembu.

<sup>1</sup> The specialized Luchazi terminology for kinds of grasshoppers on this account is noteworthy and comparable to Luvale knowledge of fish.

<sup>2</sup> Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu; in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, pp. 207-251.

## OBITUARY : PROF. A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN

ALFRED REGINALD RADCLIFFE-BROWN died in London on 24th October, 1955, at the age of 74. He was the last of that illustrious band of British anthropologists to which also belonged Haddon, Rivers, Balfour, Seligman, Marett, and Malinowski. Of them all, he and Malinowski had by far the greatest influence upon the development of modern social anthropology. In some respects he was even more influential than Malinowski: he inaugurated flourishing schools of social anthropology in South Africa and Australia, gave a new trend to anthropological work in North America, and more recently, at Oxford and elsewhere, became and remained a source of personal inspiration and guidance to the generation of post-war students who had never met Malinowski.

Born in 1881, Radcliffe-Brown was educated at Birmingham and in the University of Cambridge. At Cambridge he read mental and moral science, but under the influence of Rivers grew interested in social anthropology. Awarded the Anthony Wilkin Studentship in Ethnology, he did fieldwork first in the Andaman Islands (1906-08) and then in Western Australia (1910-12); the intervening period was spent in teaching at the London School of Economics and at Cambridge. In 1914 he returned to Australia, and subsequently became Director of Education in the kingdom of Tonga (1916-19). Because of ill health he then moved to South Africa, where he had family ties. After working for a while as Ethnologist to the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, he was in 1921 appointed Professor of Social Anthropology in the newly-created School of African Life and Languages at the University of Cape Town. From now on he had a very varied and active teaching career. He remained at Cape Town until the end of 1925, and then successively occupied Chairs of Social Anthropology at Sydney (1926-31), Chicago (1931-37), and Oxford (1937-46); he was also Visiting Professor at Yenching University, China (1935) and São Paulo, Brazil (1942-44), and after retiring as Emeritus Professor from Oxford he

taught at Alexandria (1947-50), Manchester, and Grahamstown.

Preoccupied with teaching and the organization of new departments, active in the promotion of research, and zealous in directing public interest to the practical applications of anthropology, Radcliffe-Brown had neither the time nor indeed the inclination to write voluminously. Unlike Malinowski, he published relatively little original field material. His major contributions in this respect, his book on *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) and his articles on the social organization of Australian tribes, are in fact far more important as essays in analysis and interpretation than as ethnographical documents; certainly they have never had anything like the influence of Malinowski's writings upon the development of field techniques. His dominant interest lay always in the search for general principles, and not in describing and discussing the many different aspects of man's social behaviour. In a series of presidential addresses and other papers, recently reprinted in book form as *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), he expounded briefly, but with remarkable lucidity and precision, ideas that deeply influenced the study of kinship, ritual, law, and method in general. Some of his views, and especially his attempt to develop a "natural science" of human society, have not been widely accepted; but it seems true to say that it is to him above all that modern British social anthropologists are indebted for their distinctive approach to problems of social structure.

Radcliffe-Brown's pre-eminence was reflected in the many honours that came to him. He was president of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1940-41) and life president of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the British Commonwealth, a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Amsterdam, and president of the anthropological sections of the South African, Australian, and British, Associations for the Advancement of Science; he was awarded the Rivers Memorial and Huxley Memo-



rial Medals of the Royal Anthropological Institute; and delivered the Frazer, Henry Myers, and Josiah Mason Lectures. He also had the distinction, during his lifetime, of being presented with two volumes of essays published in his honour: one by a group of his American students (1937), and the other (1949) by former students holding major University posts in England,

America, Australia, and South Africa. These he appreciated most of all: for it was his great achievement, and his abiding pride, to have become not only an intellectual stimulus but also a revered and beloved friend to those whom he taught.

I. S.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

THE PUBLICATIONS listed below have been received by the Managing Editor during the period 1st

December 1955, to 29th February 1956. This list does not include journals received on exchange.

FORDE, DARYLL, PAULA BROWN and ROBERT G. ARMSTRONG: *Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence*. International African Institute, London, 1955.

Dept. of Sociology, University College, Achimota, 1955.

HAMILTON, R. A. (Ed.): *History and Archaeology in Africa*. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. 1955.

POTGIETER, E. F.: *The Disappearing Bushmen of Lake Chrissie*. Hiddingh-Currie Publications of the University of South Africa, No. 1. J. L. van Schaik, Ltd., Pretoria. 1955.

LEKENS, BENJAMIN, and GEREBERN MENS: *Ngbandi - Idiotikon: I Nederlands-Frans en Ngbandi*. Commission de Linguistique Africaine, Ter-vuren. 1955.

SOFER, CYRIL and RHONA: *Yinja Transformed*. East African Institute for Social Research, Kampala. 1955.

NKETIA, J. H. *Funeral Dirges of the Akan People*. James Townsend & Sons, Ltd., Exeter, for

TUCKER, A. N. and J. T. O. MPAAYEI: *A Maasai Grammar*. Longmans, Green & Co., London. 1955.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**History and Archaeology in Africa.** Edited by R. A. HAMILTON. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1955. 5s.

This welcome publication is a report of a conference held in July 1953, at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. The main object of the conference was to explore ways and means of reconstructing a more coherent and reliable historical account of the peoples who were found living in the various states of Africa south of the Sahara before the European occupation of these states.

Starting from the literature of exploration and ethnography and with the co-operation of linguists, archaeologists, sociologists and others engaged in African studies, the School of Oriental and African Studies organized a seminar in London in 1950: the seminar's main task being to see how far it was possible to produce the outlines of the histories of illiterate African peoples. The tentative conclusions arrived at by that seminar formed the basis of discussions at the conference.

A number of surveys and papers that dealt with oral tradition and archaeology were presented by scholars from East, Central, West and South Central Africa. The regions covered ranged from the Sudan in the north to the Limpopo in the south, and from British East Africa to French West Africa. All these contributions made it clear that in spite of the constancy of well-preserved oral traditions that deal with the origins of dynasties and the comings and goings of peoples and cultural traits, it is rarely possible to establish a reliable chronology in excess of four hundred years. On the other hand, anthropological and linguistic data suggest that beyond the few centuries, perhaps the half millenium for which tradition accounts, the antiquity of differentiation among African peoples is marked, while archaeological exploration is beginning to show the continuity of change from the Africa of the traditions back to the Stone Age: changes that do not reveal mass migrations so much as steady infiltrations.

The Report makes it perfectly clear that the major draw-back to progress in this important penumbral, protohistoric or pre-literate, pre-European period is due mainly to inadequate archaeological exploration. Except in South Africa where field archaeology has made such enormous strides in recent years, strides that have laid bare many important protohistorical facts, the rest of the continent south of the Sahara is still far too dependant on sociologists, linguists and folklorists. The need for such archaeological exploration as has been carried out at Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe in the south is now urgent in the north. Nevertheless the progress of studies, with the increasing co-operation of various disciplines, is well revealed in this interesting Report.

Because of the vast anthropological importance of Africa as the scene of man's emergence and earliest and most continuous unbroken development, it is warmly hoped that the conference organized by the School of Oriental and African Studies is merely the first of its kind and that many similar conferences will follow. It is also hoped that the Union of South Africa will be represented for there can be no doubt whatever that we need more and more inter-state co-operation and more and more consultation between various disciplines if ever we are to understand man's origin, diffusion and development within this critical cradle. Because the subject dealt with at the conference is merely the tail-end of the extremely long story of man in Africa, its value is by no means of less moment than that attached to the phases of human development dealt with at the Pan-African Congress on Prehistory which now meets at regular four-yearly intervals.

C. VAN RIET LOWE

**A Study of GiTonga of Inhambane.** L. W. LANHAM. Bantu Linguistic Studies, No. 1, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg; 1955. viii, 264 pp., map. 15s.



Supplementary to the "Bantu Grammatical Archives" innovated by Prof. Doke, the Department of Bantu Languages of the Witwatersrand University has now also begun a series of publications called "Bantu Linguistic Studies" edited by Prof. D. T. Cole. Mr. Lanham's *A Study of GiTonga of Inhambane*, which is under discussion in the present review, is the first publication in this series, and to save the cost of printing it has been mimeographed. Although a printed book has its obvious advantages Prof. Cole is to be congratulated on his new series which will undoubtedly produce valuable work which otherwise might never have become public property.

The work under review has 12 chapters and 3 appendices. Chapter I deals with Phonetics, Phonology and Orthography in approximately one-third of the number of pages of the book. It is evident that Mr. Lanham has a special liking for phonetics, especially phonemics. He also stresses the fact that his is a synchronic study. On this account he tries his very best to exclude any semblance of a diachronic approach, although on page 72 he admits by implication that some processes cannot be deduced from synchronic data alone. The writer also indulges in discussions on sound phenomena without saying anything new. He applies the latest phonemic theories and their problems to giTonga (page 34). (Perhaps there is more to the saying that phonemics is common sense made difficult than meets the eye). Whatever one's likes or dislikes are as regards phonemics in the field of study of Bantu languages, Mr. Lanham has introduced something new in the approach to the study of sounds in the Bantu languages of South Africa. In his practical orthography, a phonemic one, *j* stands for *dz*, *c* for *ts* and so on. He does not explain the choice of his symbols.

As regards the giTonga word Mr. Lanham now discards the Doke theory of stress as a criterion in word-division, but still retains a prosodic element, viz. length, as a "boundary marker", thereby stressing the value he attaches to phonetics. It is a pity that the writer indulges in a long theoretical discussion of prosodic elements (page 75) without saying more than is generally assumed

in connection with tone. Mr. Lanham would have rendered a greater service had he given a fuller exposition of prosodic elements.

As regards the grammatical analysis beginning with Chapter 2, the conventional method (at least as far as South Africa is concerned), Doke's method of analysis is followed in the main. There is little evolution in the approach, except that he follows Cole in respect of the quantitative (Cole is not the first to regard it as a qualificative). Mr. Lanham also differs from Doke in respect of the copulative, and his treatment on the basis set out in an article of his is more acceptable than Doke's.

Mr. Lanham's treatment of the grammatical phenomena is interspersed with discussions which are often rather in the nature of separate articles - an example is his discussion of the stative verb. He finds that "any separate classification . . . is unjustified", nevertheless he goes on to distinguish "more fully the nature of the differences between stative and non-stative verbs . . ." It is evident that "stative verbs" are such by virtue of their English translation which is different from that of their perfect equivalents, and not because of formal differences as in Nguni. Is it not possible, as in Nguni, that any verb may be used with a "stative" significance although it cannot always be translated by an English "stative" meaning?

Apart from Mr. Lanham's indulgence in discussions which mar the continuity of the presentation of his material one cannot but admire his thorough study of the grammatical phenomena of giTonga. This language provides much food for thought. What is, perhaps, most striking is the conjugational formatives of the verb. These strike one as being completely different from those found in the Bantu languages of the Union with which giTonga is connected in its classification. No less interesting are the copulative forms. On the whole giTonga presents many phenomena of interest, such as the locative suffix *-tunu*, the use of the locative prefixes, the two types of possessive constructions, the "loss" of the absolute pronoun and so on. (One wonders why on pages 111 and 112 the inflexions of the few absolute pronouns are mentioned while similar inflexions of

other parts of speech are kept for Chapter 8).

Finally we have three appendices. In Appendix A Mr. Lanham indulges in one of his discussions of possessives generally, only to elaborate on a matter he has already dealt with sufficiently in Chapter 5, III. He seems to be very set on giving suitable reasons for making a distinction between direct and indirect possession (i.e. "true" possession and "qualificative" possession). He has a case in the formal distinction but for the rest it remains an open question whether there is an inherent difference between the two.

Appendix B is an attempt to determine the place of giTonga in the Bantu language family. Mr. Lanham's method is rather remarkable for a linguistic study for his conclusions are reached through sheer mathematical deduction.

Appendix C on oriental loan-words would have been a most interesting study for a separate paper on the subject if other neighbouring languages had also been considered.

Mr. Lanham has presented a thorough study of giTonga as far as actual material and facts, illustrated by a wealth of examples, are concerned. In his phonemic approach to the sound system he brings into the field of Bantu linguistics the latest ideas from other fields of linguistics. His grammatical approach is fundamentally "Dokean". His method of presentation is often marred by discussions which in themselves are interesting perhaps, but which are out of place in presenting new material.

Whatever objections one may raise to Mr. Lanham's approach and method, the fact remains that he has presented a thorough study of a Bantu language of which very little was known, a language representing a group whose characteristics are virtually unknown. Mr. Lanham is to be congratulated on the excellent service he has rendered to Bantu linguistics.

D.Z.

**Peoples of the Horn of Africa.** I. M. LEWIS. *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, North Eastern Africa, Part I.* International African Institute, London, 1955. 21s.

The *Ethnographic Survey of Africa* which is being undertaken by the International African Institute breaks new ground in this its first volume in the section dealing with North Eastern Africa, a part of the continent less well known anthropologically than regions to the south and west. Mr Lewis' compilation concerns the Somali, Afar (Danakil) and Saho peoples of the Somalilands, Eritrea, Eastern Ethiopia and North-eastern Kenya. His work brings together a great deal of diverse and scattered information, much of it not in English sources, which has not hitherto been generally available. Some idea of the labour involved can be gained from a glance at the several hundred entries in his bibliography.

For some reason the Somali, the principal people of the Horn and about two million strong, have not attracted the attention of professional anthropologists, nor has any skilled amateur produced a standard work. Yet, apart from their sheer numbers and the size of the area they inhabit, they hold considerable interest in their tribal and lineage structure, their ecology, their history and so on. Neither they nor the Danakil (over 100,000) can be regarded as small, insignificant tribal groups buried in the depths of Darkest Africa. Many of them live on or near the Indian Ocean, they have for centuries had continual contact with the outside world, they have been under European colonial suzerainty for a long time and in Islam they strongly embrace a world religion.

Not unnaturally Mr. Lewis gives most attention to the Somali, who are also the best documented. Nearly half of his account of them is contained in his chapter on "Social organization and political structure", in which he chiefly concentrates on the tribe and the agnatic basis of society. He writes (page 112): "The relations of all social units are in principle expressed genealogically in terms of agnatic descent from eponymous ancestors." Here is revealed a storehouse of comparative data for those interested in the lineage and the inter-relations of agnatic descent and political structure and which need to be studied in conjunction with the work of the Oxford anthropologists.

The author does not, however, neglect other aspects of social life in so far as the information is



available. There is, for example, a useful chapter on Islam in Somaliland, and accounts are given of physical conditions, economic life and the main cultural features which invite a future synthesis. The Afar (Danakil) and Saho peoples are not so fully treated, but this, one imagines, is not the author's fault for his aim was only to bring together existing material.

The work has been something of a pioneer effort which deserves the gratitude of Africanists and others. As far as can be seen by one who claims no especial knowledge of this part of Africa, Mr. Lewis is to be congratulated on his orderly presentation of a difficult and complex subject, for it cannot have been easy with such a wealth of uneven sources and no major guides. It is to be hoped that he and others, stimulated by this initial success, will undertake more detailed and deeper research for he admits frankly to the many lacunae and contradictory data. At this stage of the presentation of the subject it would not do to be too critical of the volume under review, and the only comment immediately suggested concerns the bibliography - a chronically weak point in the publications of this Ethnographic Survey. Here the lengthy, presumably exhaustive list of references is quite bewildering to the ordinary reader or the comparative student. It is of course one of the functions of the Survey to give comprehensive bibliographies, but could there not also be provided separately a selective and carefully annotated list of the most useful and most easily obtainable sources? Except for the rare specialist Mr. Lewis' list is merely frightening and he should have made available the fruits of his own researches in this respect.

P. H. GULLIVER

**Dictionnaire Kiluba-français.** E. VAN AVERMAET, O.F.M., in collaboration with BENOÎT MBUYA. Vol. 7, *Annales du Musée Royal du Congo Belge*, Tervuren; 1954. xvi, 838 pp., double col.

This is an extremely good piece of work dealing with Kiluba (as distinct from the Tfiluba spoken

further west); the author suggests the term Luba-Katanga as the best description for the types of Luba covered in this book. He pays eloquent tribute to the works of Vandermeiren (his grammar and vocabulary of Kiluba-Hemba), and to A. de Clercq's large *Grammaire de la langue Luba*, which contains very extensive vocabularies. Use has been made of other existing vocabularies and word-lists such as those published by Roland. A large amount of encyclopaedic and ethnographic material is included under the entries, and for this special acknowledgment is made to the publications of Colle (*Les Baluba*) and Burton (*L'Ame Luba*). Typical of this ethnographic treatment are the stem *-kifi* (*n-kifi* and *mu-kifi*), designating "spirit", and the superior term *vidye*. The dictionary is rich in idiomatic usages of words and in illustrative sentences, most valuable in assessing the real significance of words. There is, however, a certain weakness on the etymological side. For instance the verb entries *-mweka* (p. 416) and *-mwena* (p. 417) are not signified as neuter and applied forms of *-mona* (p. 408); and under the latter the perfect is not given as *-mwene*, although illustrative sentences do use the form. Some attention to this side of lexicographical work would increase the value of the book under review.

The author has very wisely entered his words under the alphabetical initial of the roots, and not under the initial consonant of prefixes as earlier Luba publications have done. This naturally presents some difficulty of decision with nouns commencing in nasals, and he has dealt wisely in placing these under the nasal, with cross-reference at times to a probably simpler stem. The author has used his own initiative in certain matters of orthography. Symbols *e* and *o* are used, though the vowels have the phonetic value of *ɛ* and *ɔ*. This is wise. Though he uses the symbols *y* and *w* for the semi-vowels, he lists them under *i* and *u* respectively, from which they are derived. This is a very questionable improvement. The symbol *b* is used for both *b* and *β*, as the former occurs only in the nasal compound *mb*; similarly *p* represents *p* and *Φ* as the former is only found in the compound *mp*. The symbol *ŋ* is used for the velar nasal when it occurs before vowels; it should also have

been used in *ng* and *nk* instead of *ng* and *nk*, which he has used. This lack of consistent application of phonetic and phonemic principles results in difficult word-order in some cases; for instance on pp. 431-438 we have *nga*, *ya*, *nge*, *ye*, etc. mixed up throughout; then follows *nya*, *nye*, etc., and after *nyu* comes *nka*, *nke*, etc.; then *no*-, *ns*-, *nt*-, and so on: all most confusing; similar to the confusion resultant on listing *y* and *w* under *i* and *u*.

Further, simplification in orthography could have been achieved if *si*, *sy*, *zi* and *zy* were used instead of *fi*, *fy*, *zi* and *zy*, if it had been recognized that *s* and *f* belong to the same phoneme, as also do *z* and *ʒ*. This would have helped in orthography with the Northern and Eastern dialectal forms where *s* and *z* do not change to *f* and *ʒ* under the palatal influence of the vowel *i*. If this principle had been followed, *tf* could then have been represented by *c*.

Van Avermaet deals well with the question of tone. He points out that the same principles as obtain in Tjiluba, expounded so thoroughly by Burssens, apply to Kiluba. He marks the low tone by a grave accent and leaves the commoner high tone unmarked. Great care has been taken, throughout the dictionary, with the marking of the tones.

The rules governing vowel length are well set out, but the author has missed the importance of the application of these rules in determining correct word-division. The lengthening of *na* (to become *na*·) before a word commencing with a nasal compound, should have warned him that *na* is not a word, but a prefix, and should always be joined up to what follows. In the case of *kudya-nfima* we are dealing with a compound, which should be written *kudya-nfima*. As a matter of fact he actually remarks on p. x, regarding this latter: "Les deux mots ne forment qu'une seule expression." A careful examination of such a valuable rule of vowel length – that the vowel before a nasal compound is always long – would probably correct *ku mbila* to *ku·mbila*, hence *kumbila* (see p. 291a), or *pa mpeka-to* to *pa·mpeka-to*, hence *pampeka-to* (see p. 484a); and in this latter case, cf. *pa-ayw·kile*, where the author has joined it up.

The book is in French throughout, but Dutch equivalent meanings are often inserted, adding value thereto. A mine of valuable material, presented in a way that inspires confidence in its reliability, makes this work a real contribution to Bantu linguistic studies.

C. M. DOKE

**Geschichte der Erforschung der Nilotischen Sprachen.** OSWIN KÖHLER. *Afrika und Uebersee*, Beiheft 28, Dietrich Reimer, Berlin, 1955. Teks 61 bladsye. DM 14.50.

Dit was op aansporing van Westermann dat Köhler sowat nege jare gelede sy aandag gaan toespits het op die Nilotiese tale, en in 1948 het hy by wyse van 'n proefskrif vir die doktorsgraad sy eerste bevindinge bekend gemaak. Behalwe 'n beskrywing van die klanksisteem bevat die studie ter inleiding 'n oorsig van die geskiedenis van ondersoek, die verspreiding en die indeling van die Nilotiese tale. Wat hier aangebied word, is die inleiding in uitgebreide en verwerkte vorm.

In breë trekke vertoon die geskiedenis van die taalondersoek hier dieselfde of soortgelyke fases as wat ons elders waarneem. Gebrek aan vakkundige opleiding, deels ook aan belangstelling, beperk taalbedrywighede in die begin hoofsaaklik tot die optekening van woorde en die opstel van woordelyste; meesal is reisigers en sendelinge hiervoor veran woordelik. Om verwantskap tussen naburige tale te bepaal, is sulke taalproewe nuttig maar voldoen geensins wanneer groter groeperinge aangedurf word. In die daaropvolgende tydvak bring die outsluiting van Oos-Afrika 'n oplewing. Wetenskaplike belangstelling neem toe en verdienstelike monografieë maak dit moontlik om 'n beter begrip van die taalbou te kry. Pogings om 'n verband tussen Nilotiese tale en aangrensende taalfamilies vas te stel vaar nie so gelukkig nie; daarteenoor neem die indeling van die Nilotiese tale hoe langer hoe meer vorm aan danksy die voorbeeld wat geleerdes soos Westermann, Meinhof, Delafosse en ander stel.

Köhler is as kenner deurgaans bewus van die ingewikkelde problematiek van sy studieveld; hy be-



waar dus 'n versigtige terughoudendheid, neem nie oorhaastig 'n standpunt in nie en pas sy kritiek spaarsamig toe. Ooglopende flaters en dwalinge word egter saaklik en onomwonde aan die kaak gestel; vgl. sy bespreking van Reinisch (bl. 25), Murray (bl. 34), Delafosse (bl. 36) en Drexel (bl. 37). Met dieselfde uitgesprokenheid lê hy die vinger op faktore in die algemeen wat die taal-vergelyking strem: die neiging om op woordverwantskap eerder as op strukturele verwantskap te let, die onnoukeurige weergawe van die klanke, die gebrek aan 'n gekoördineerde skrywing wat uitloop op die konferensie van Rejaf (1928).

'n Indrukwekkende bibliografie waarvan die items na tydsorde gerangskik is, 'n opgawe van addisionele manuskripte en geskrifte sonder jaartal, registers en 'n taalkaart voltooi hierdie waardevolle studie.

J. A. Engelbrecht

#### Report of the Committee on Bride Price.

Enugu, 1955. 55 pp. 1s. 6d.

This report arose as a result of the high sums paid over by the bridegroom's family to the bride's family. What is quite clear is that the members of this report have not understood the meaning and function of "bride price". Thus the Uyo County Council rightly condemned the use of the term *bride price* where, as they point out, the meaning in Ibibio would be a person bought as a slave (p. 42). The Ibibio recommended the use of their term *nkpo ndo*, but why not use the widely used term *lobolo*. The members of the Commission speak of a man buying a wife (p. 7)! If the woman is bought, she is a slave and can be sold. Now the husband cannot sell his wife. What then has he bought? Nowhere is it made explicit that he buys the right to keep her children whereas otherwise they would belong to the group of the bride's family. That such is the correct interpretation and function of the "bride price" can be seen from the following statements. Thus, "Amongst the Ijaws ... there are two systems of marriage - a big dowry system in which the children belong to the father's family and a small dowry system in

which the children belong to the mother's family" (p. 7). Where the woman is unmarried as in Amichi village, "any children born belong to the maternal grand-parents and are regarded in all respects as fully legitimate" (p. 11). "If divorce occurred, the slaves (*sic*) together with any children of the marriage remained with the husband" (p. 27). It is interesting to read that there are slaves in existence. Are they a new and recent development or a continuation of the pre-British administration?

It is a complete misconception to refer to a matrilineal marriage system as "recognized concubinage". It is quite clear that the committee does not understand the meaning of concubine.

The following condition on the status of children can only be explained on the understanding that the wrongly called "bride price" (it should be "child price") payments are payments to keep the children of the bride irrespective of the begetter. "A separation may be granted, though any children born to another man are regarded as the property of the legal husband" (p. 33), because he has paid for the right to keep them. This point is made clear in the Bere system of marriage in the Brass division. "This is a patrilineal system under which the children belong to the father and have the right to inherit from him. It is a highly esteemed system though its practice formerly was not common as when a father gave his daughter out in big dowry (Bere) he lost all rights to any children which may be born."

The Committee does not appear to have read any literature on African marriage systems though there is ample available.

There are a number of inaccurate statements. Thus the following assertion is quite wrong: "With the impact of Western civilization, changes began to appear in the traditional system. Pseudo-forms of currency such as cowries and manillas, brass and iron rods came to be used for trading which had previously been by barter only ..." These currencies were in use in western Africa long before any Europeans had ever visited the Guinea coasts. The authors of this report do not appear to have checked up on any of the statements made to them. Thus page 7 the statement that clitoridectomy is performed between the ages of one



and two is wrong. It takes place among the Ibibio after puberty and is rare in the Eket division. Among the Ibo clitoridectomy is done between 1 and 2 years of age.

The statement that in the Aba division prior to 1946 divorce was comparatively rare is not true. An examination of the court records of the Aba division for 1925-35 will show a high divorce rate.

On page 8 is the statement that a low dowry means a high divorce rate: on p. 9 there is just the opposite statement. 2,800 manillas at 6 to the shilling is not approximately equal to £25 but to £23.

Most of the recommendations are unsound and unjustified. The Ikot Ekpene County Council was quite right when it said that "the 'bride price' should not be standardized as this is incompatible with Native Law and Custom in the Division". If it is felt that the dowries paid are too high legislation limiting the amounts payable will achieve nothing. The way to tackle this inflation is to make a rule of court that not more than half the amount of dowry paid is refundable. Such a rule is enforceable and will be effective (p. 46).

Why divorce by mutual consent should be excluded is not explained (p. 47). Here is another absurdity. The payment of the dowry is a contract between the two families wherein the bride plays no part. The bridegroom for a consideration keeps her children. Her group for this consideration waives their claim to her children. Yet the absurd recommendation is made that if the woman, e.g. commits adultery, she should refund the dowry to which she is not a party.

The Ibibio system of deducting a certain sum for each child born when it comes to refunding the dowry on divorce is sane and should not be abolished.

As for the recommendation of abolishing the Matrilineal Systems of Marriage it is quite clear that the Committee did not have as a member anyone to represent the Matrilineal systems. To alter it means among other things altering the naming system: the kinship system: the duties of burials: the duties of worship and of inheritance. You cannot abolish so intimate a sanction as

marriage without wrecking both the social structure and the social organization.

In conclusion it is a very amateurish and unsatisfactory report. The Committee sat at 29 centres and at 10 no evidence was taken because there was no attendance of the local populace to tender evidence (p. 52). It is astonishing therefore to read that the Government under the signature of Esin A. Esin accepts without a demur these recommendations.

M. D. W. JEFFREYS

**Zuid-Kisongye Bloemlezing - Milembwe - Teksten.** LEO STAPPERS, C.I.C.M. *Annalen van het Koninklijk Museum van Belgisch-Kongo, Tervuren, België, 1953.*

Hierdie werkie bestaan uit 'n aantal tekste van geskiedkundige en folkloristiese aard opgeteken in Suid-Kisongye met 'n Vlaamse vertaling daarnaas. Dit word voorafgegaan deur 'n kort volkekundige oorsig van die Milembwe wat die taal praat, asook deur 'n aantal interessante aantekeninge oor die klankleer.

Die skryfwyse wat deur die outeur gevolg word, noem hy as dié van die „conjunctieve metode". Dit is egter nie in dieselfde mate conjunktief, soos sommige van die Suid-Oostelike Bantoetale geskryf word nie. Sover as moontlik is 'n fonemiese transkripsie in die skryfwyse gevolg, behalwe waar in sekere gevalle, blykbaar om praktiese redes, 'n meer geykte fonetiese transkripsie gevolg is, vgl. bv. p. XVII (7).

Die aantekeninge i.v.m. die lengte van die vokale getuig van deeglike studie, want tot nog tot is die studie van duretik in die Bantoetale taamlik afgeskeep, wat verbasend is as in aanmerking geneem word dat dit so 'n belangrike rol in die Bantoeprosodie speel. Soos in baie ander werke oor die Kongotale word daar ook hier die verskillende tone aangedui. Die skrywer hoop om 'n afsonderlike verhandeling later oor die klankleer te publiseer, en dit behoort van groot waarde te wees te oordeel na hierdie voorlopige aantekeninge.

In die meer Noordelike gebiede waar daar minder ontwikkelde mense is onder die inheemse bevolking moet sulke tekste van groot waarde



wees by die studie van die tale aangesien hulle in die meeste gevalle nog nie 'n redelike letterkunde kon opbou soos die Suid-Afrikaanse tale nie. Daarom is hierdie publikasie 'n welkome bydrae en ook 'n verdere verryking van die groeiende literatuur oor die Bantoetale in die Dietse Tale. In hierdie verband stel die Vlaminge hulle Afrikaanse stamverwante 'n goeie voorbeeld. J. A. LOUW

**The Trade of Lake Victoria.** V. C. R. FORD.  
East African Studies No. 3, East African  
Institute of Social Research, Kampala. 11s.

This is a valuable study not only of the trade of Lake Victoria but also of the geography of the marginal lands which are some of the most densely populated and most highly productive in East Africa. The limits of the Lake Victoria zone are treated briefly region by region, and the important relationships between the frequency and size of lake ports in the wetter and prosperous north and west, on the one hand, and in the drier and less developed south and east, on the other, are established. This is well brought out not only in the text but also in the accompanying maps.

The book contains four chapters. It begins with the geographical setting of Lake Victoria; then follows the historical geography of the trade of the lake, and its particular relationship to the development of the Uganda and the Tanganyika railways; the rise and decline of the dhow trade is described and its competition with the railway steamer services are discussed; the final chapter concerns the detailed trade in a number of specific commodities.

Among the most interesting questions that are answered is whether the lake provides a unifying

influence among the peoples who trade along its shores. Eighty years ago Stanley noted that intercourse between one part of the lake and another was non-existent. To-day the author concludes that Lake Victoria has not yet bound the peoples around its shores into a common community. "It is the transit traffic between the two outlets of Kisumu and Mwanza which is of overwhelming importance and for the majority of the people the lake is a medium connecting them with the outside world and not with other parts of the lake margins." An important advance was the establishment of the East African Inter-territorial Organization in 1948 for the lake's transport, customs and fisheries services.

This book is an important contribution to the geography of East Africa. T.J.D.F.

**A Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts preserved in the University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria.** W. E. N. KENS DALE, Deputy Librarian. Ibadan University Library, 1955. Fascicule 1. 14 pp.

Orientalists and librarians alike will be interested in this little work compiled and printed at the progressive University at Ibadan. Much bibliographical diligence has gone into the compilation. Information given includes biographical notes on the authors, descriptions of subject matter and full collations, or otherwise reference is made to other works where these details may be found. Alternative spellings of names are given and the whereabouts of other copies noted, if known. Two further fascicules are to follow, the last to include an author and title index.

E. H.